

137  
THE  
VNBELLEVERS  
PREPARING FOR  
CHRIST.

LUKE I. 17.

*To make ready a people prepared for the  
Lord.*

By T. HOOKER

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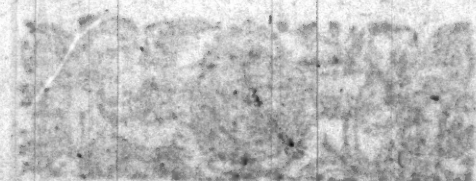
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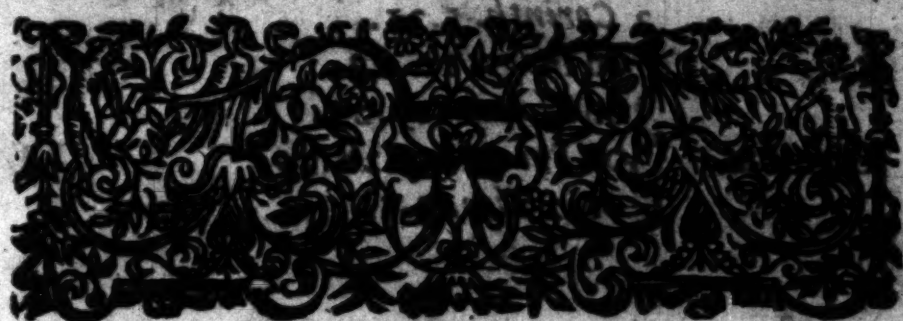


THE  
VINDICATED  
PREPARING FOR  
CHRIST

1781



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## Severall Treatises of this A V T H O R.

1. **T**HE Vnbelcēvers preparing for Christ,  
out of,

Revelations 22. 17.  
1 Corin<sup>th</sup>. 2. 14.  
Ezekiel 11. 19.  
Luke 19. 42.  
Matthew 20. 3, 4, 5, 6.  
John 6. 44.

2. The soules Preparation for Christ, or a Treatise of Contrition, on Acts 2. 37.
3. The Soules Humiliation, on Luke 15. Verses 15, 16, 17, 18.
4. The Soules Vocation, or Effectuall Calling to Christ, on John 6. 45.
5. The Soules Vnion with Christ, 1 Cor. 6. 17.
6. The Soules benefit from union with Christ, on 1 Cor. 1. 30.



7. The Soules Iustification, eleven Sermons on  
2 Corinth. 5. 21.

8.

Sermons

on Judges 10. 23.

on Psalme 119. 29.

on Proverbs 1. 28, 29.

on 2 Tim. 3. 5.

Several Treatises of this

A V T H O R.

THE Vnbelievers preparing for Christ  
out of

Revelation 22. 17.

1 Corinth. 2. 14.

1 Peter 1. 12.

Luke 19. 42.

Matthew 20. 3. 45, 6.

John 6. 44.

9. The Soules Preparation for Christ, on Titus

2. 11, 12, 13.

10. The Soules Humiliation; on Luke 12. Verses

12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

11. The Soules Vocation, or Effectual Calling

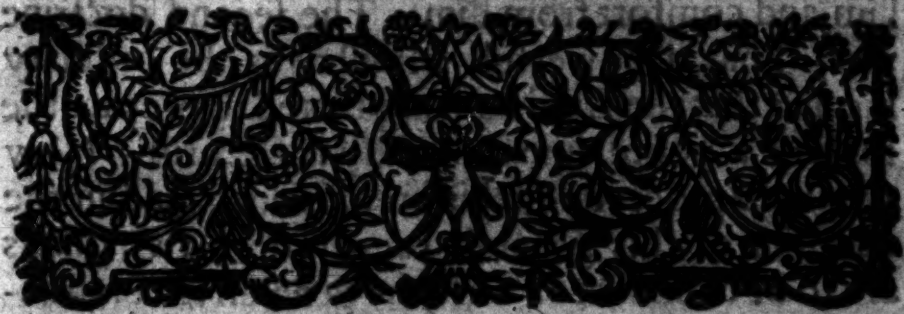
to Christ, on John 6. 45.

12. The Soules Vision with Christ, 1 Cor. 13.

13. The Soules benefit from union with Christ.

on 1 Cor. 1. 30.

on 1 Cor. 6. 17.



# PREPARING FOR CHRIST.

REV. 22. 17.

*Whoſoever will, let him taſte of the water of life freely.*



Efore the ſoule of a man can partake of the benefits of Chriſt, two things are required: Firſt, that the ſoule bee prepared for Chriſt. Secondly, that the ſoule bee implanted into Chriſt. Concerning preparation, there hath beene two doctrines

handled out of Luke, 1. 17. The firſt of which, That the ſoule of a poore ſinner muſt bee prepared

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for the Lord Iesus Christ, before it can receive him, and comfort from him. The second doctrine was, That a powerfull Ministry is the ordinary meanes that the Lord hath appointed to prepare the soule of a poore sinner soundly for Christ. Now we are to proceede in this preparation, and in the handling of this generall preparation, two things are to be considered. First, the generall circumstances that pertain to preparation: And secondly, the substantiall parts of preparation. For the generall circumstances which are most remarkable in preparation, they are twofold; some on Gods part, and these are, First, the freeness of the offer of his grace. Secondly, the universality of this offer of grace, *To all*. And thirdly, the easiness of the condition whereupon he offereth it, *Whosoever will may receive it, and that freely*. On mans part, two things are to be considered. First, he must consider that his owne corruption doth oppose this grace of God. And secondly, he must consider, that God hath appointed to worke this grace in man, and to take away man as corruption which opposeth the same. So that there bee five things considerable in preparation, as generall circumstances thereof, before we come to the substantiall parts of it. The first is this, namely, *That the offer of grace, that God propounds to him, and will worke in him is free*. Secondly, the condition of grace and Gods offer is this, *That a man must will to receive Christ and grace, before hee can receive Christ and grace*. Thirdly, *He that doth truly will to receive Christ and grace, shall have Christ and grace*. And fourthly, *That no man of himselfe naturally*

Five things in  
Preparation.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

*naturally can will that hee may receive Christ. Lastly, That God will work a will in his servants to receive the Lord Iesus Christ, and then hee will bestow him upon them.* And these are the five passages which are generall circumstances of preparation. And three of these points which are the three first, we have in this text, *Every man that will let him take freely of the water of life*; here is the free offer of Gods mercy and goodnesse. Here also we see that a man must will Christ and grace before hee can have Christ. And thirdly, that he that doth truly will Christ shall have him, and grace and salvation by him.

Wee will open a word or two in the text, and so proceede. First, wee must see what is meant here by *water*. Secondly, what is meant by *water of life*. First, what is meant by *water*: by water is meant here the Spirituall grace of God, together with the immediate assistance of his holy Spirit in the working of the same upon the soule of man.

In *water* here wee may conclude two things, not onely the grace which God doth convey to the soules of his people, but also the assistance of the Spirit working the same in the soule; looke for the truth of this, the 7. of *Iohn* 38, 39. *He that beleeueth on me* (saith the text) *as the scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Now what are these waters here spoken of; in the next verse the text saith, *This spoke our Saviour of the Spirit, which they that beleeved on him should receive from him*, that is, the working assistance of his Spirit. So that we see in this place of *S. Iohn*, this phrase is ex-



pounded, and so the 4. of *Iohn* the 10. verse, the like phrase is used. There our Saviour replieth to the woman of *Samarita* after this manner. *If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drinke, Thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* And so in the 14. vers. *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.* That is, hee that receiveth the grace of Gods Spirit, and the assistance thereof, it shall be a well of water to him, springing up into everlasting life. Hence it is that Christ is called, *The fountaine of the garden*: and a well of living water, *Can. 4. 15. Jer. 2. 14.* He is called, *The fountaine of living waters*; *My people* (saith the text) *have forsaken the fountaine of living waters, and have hewen unto them Cisternes, even broken Cisternes that can hold no water.* So that Christ Iesus is the fountaine; the grace of God are the rivers, and the operation of the Spirit, as the streames, which make glad the City of God: or else, Christ is the Conduit, the graces of God the cocke, and the operation of the Spirit is the drawer of the water which comes into the soules of his servants. So that we see plainly, that by water is meant the graces of Gods Spirit, which God is pleased to convey and worke in the soules of his servants. The second phrase in the text is *water of life*: and wee must see what is meant by that, it is as much as if a man should say quickning grace: and that is said to be *the water of life* in two regards. First,

First, because it is that which begets a spirituall life in us; a man is dead without the Lord Iesus, and the graces of his Spirit, *Without me you can doe nothing*, saith our Saviour: but looke as it is with the graft which is out of the Stocke, it prospereth not, nor bringeth forth fruite, but withereth away; So those that are not engrafted into Christ, which have not the power of Christ to assist them, they are dead in trespasses and sinnes; but when this grace and Spirit comes, it is a lively grace, and a quickning Spirit; it begets life in the soule of a man. In the 47 of *Ezech. vers. 9.* the Prophet there discovering the time of the Gospell, and the offer of salvation therein, he saith there, *Everything shall live whithersoever this river commeth*: The rivers there are nothing else but the rivers of grace and salvation; when Christ shall come, abundance of grace shall be offered and wrought in the soules of Gods people, and wheresoever this grace commeth, those that be dead shall be quickned. Secondly, they are said to be *waters of life*, in regard of the continuance of them, for wheresoever this grace is truly wrought, it never ceaseth; so saith our Saviour, *Ioh. 4. 14. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.* This water is not like a pit or standing poole, that in the heate of summer is dried up, but it runneth amaine continually. So that the frame of the words runne thus; Whosoever will, let him come and take living water, living and quickning grace from Iesus Christ freely, whereby a soule may be quickned and saved: here



is a proclamation, *Whoever will, let him come, and take the Lord Christ, and grace and salvation by him freely*, he will not repine at the favour he vouchsafes unto us; take more hope, more faith, more sanctification; come, and come freely, and the more oftener ye come, the more welcome shal you be: This is the substance of the words in the text; wherein wee have these three points formerly spoken of. First, here wee have the freeness of Gods mercy, *Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*: as who should say, shall any man bring money with him and buy grace? no, no, let him take the Spirit freely. Secondly, *A man must will Christ, before he can receive Christ and grace from him*, and this is the second thing in the text. The third is, *That every man that doth truly will Christ and grace, shall have Christ and grace from him*. Men thinke that they would be saved, every man will be ready to say, I would have Christ rule in me, but this same willing of Christ is a hard matter; whosoever doth will heartily to receive Christ, shall have him and salvation by him: but wee shall finde it a hard matter to bring our hearts to this willing of Christ, as wee shall here hereafter; and thus wee see the three points that arise out of the text, and by this time we are entred into our worke, let us proceede with the pursuite of the first point, which is this, *The offer of grace from God is altogether free*. There is nothing but onely Gods will that moves him, nothing but his owne good pleasure that perswades him to shew mercy to a poore soule, there is nothing out of God,

God that can move him, or purchase this favour from him, but it is from out of the goodnesse of his nature, and the freenesse of his will, he will have it so. In the 21 of the *Revel.* 6. there is a marvelous pregnant place for this purpose, there saith the text, *I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountaine of the water of life freely.* There are three things or phrases considerable. First, God will give him to drinke, and what is freer than gift; nay, that we may know that he will not give it us upon any consideration, he will give it freely; nay, marke further, hee will give it to every one that thirsteth: though a man desireth it earnestly, even as a man that is a thirst desireth drinke, though he doe what he can to obtaine it, though hee use all meanes for the procuring of it, yet God will give it him, and that freely; and this cuts the throates of merit-mongers the Papists, that stand so much upon their merits, and therefore it is observeable in the 4. of *Zach.* 7. 9. in the building of the materiall Temple, the text saith, *That Zerubbabels hands which had layd the foundation thereof, should finish it.* The same hand which layd the first stone, so the same hand should lay the last: the meaning of the place is this; when the poore people of *Israel* were to build the Temple in time of persecution, they had no ability of themselves to do it, yet the Lord bids them go on cheerefully, for *I will dispose of all things, for the gold and silver is mine:* and hereby the Lord doth quippe at a secret conceite of theirs; they might thinke with themselves, *alasse, wee have no gold, wee have no silver,*  
how



how shall we bring this worke to passe; the Lord he answers this secret objection of theirs, and tells them, *the gold is mine, the silver is mine, the bands of Zerubbabell that hath layd the first stone, shall bring forth the headstone thereof,* and what is the ground of all this, the reason is rendered in the 7. vers. *All the people shall cry grace, grace;* as if they had said, Grace hath sent meanes, grace hath continued meanes, grace hath given us hearts to use the means, all is grace, nothing but grace and mercy hath done it; thus the people admired at Gods great goodnesse, that did so helpe them, and shouted crying, grace, grace: And as it was thus in the materiall Temple; so it is here in the building of the soule a Temple for the Lord. The beginning of grace, the receiving of grace, the continuing of grace, all is grace, grace: from the beginning of election, to the end of glorification; from the beginning of conversion, to the end of salvation, all is grace and mercy; nothing but grace that doth all, workes all, prepares all for the good of Gods people. Gods grace and mercy is altogether free, and the freedome of it appeareth in these three particulars. It is free, First, in regard of the preparation of the meanes of grace that God hath invented; the meanes of salvation which God hath invented for his people being fallen in *Adam*, was altogether free, for when *Adam* had forsaken God and hearkned to the enemy, had left the way of holinesse, and went into the way of confusion, it was free with God whether he would helpe him or no; when *Adam* had spent the

the patrimony which God had given him, it was free whether God would set him up againe or no, free it was in God the Father, which appointed the Sonne as the meanes; free it was in Christ Iesus, that tooke the taske upon him; and free in the holy Spirit, that wrought grace and salvation in the hearts of Gods people; God out of his free will gave his Sonne to redeeme mankinde, and Christ gave himselfe freely, and the holy Ghost doth freely worke comfort in the hearts of Gods chosen: it was free with God to appoint Christ for the meanes, free with Christ to be the meanes, free with the Spirit to worke the meanes.

Secondly, as it is free in regard of the appointing the meanes, so likewise in regard of the Revelation of the meanes to any soule, it was free with God, whether he would enlighten any mans eyes, and bring Salvation unto him; why doth God raine upon one Citie and not upon another? that is, why doth the dew of the Gospell raine upon one place, and not upon another? it is for nothing but because it is Gods will it should be so; in the 4 of *Luke* the 25. the place is very pregnant for this purpose, *There saith the text many widdowes were in Israel, in the dayes of Elias, when the heavens were shut up three yeares and sixe moneths, but to none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta a City of Sidon, unto a woman which was a widdow;* and this was onely out of Gods free grace: he may take the meanes from one man, and give it to another, he may send his Gospell and the meanes of Salvation to one

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poore soule, to one poore towne in a Shire or County, and not to another, according to his owne good pleasure, for his mercy is free, looke into the 17 of the *Acts* the 30. together with the 6 of the *Acts* the 1. for those two places interpret one another, in the 17 of *Acts* the 30. the text saith, *And the times of this ignorance God winked at*, now the word *winked at* is the same with the word *neglected* *Acts* 6. 1. there saith the text, *There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrewes, because their widowes were neglected in the daily ministration*, the word in the Originall, signifies not to regard a thing, and the same doth the word *winked at* signify, in *Acts* 17. 30. *The Lord winked at this ignorance*, as if he should say, the Lord over-looked and regarded it not: the heathen they never had the knowlede of his lawes, he neglected the heathen, and had an eye onely upon the Iewes; he vouchsafed his grace, and ordinary meanes of Salvation to them onely, and why was this? it was of his free mercy, of his owne good pleasure, and for the others, the abuse of their knowledge: and as the freedome of Gods grace and mercy appeareth in the appointing of the meanes, and in Revelation of the meanes; so

Thirdly, it appeares in the blessing of the meanes, it is in the free mercy of God, that any meanes of Grace and Salvation are blessed unto men, and that they worke upon the soules of men, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. there saith the text, *after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, is pleased*

pleased God by the foolishnesse of Preaching, to save them that beleeve: how comes it to passe, that men beleeve and are saved? why? it is because it pleaseth God, it is not because men could procure this, but it is of Gods meere good will, of his free goodnesse and mercy; and this was the cause of our Saviour Christs great thankes-giving, *Math. 11. 25, 26.* many poore soules were converted by the Preaching of his Apostles, and therefore saith Christ, *I thanke thee O Father Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so father, for it seemed good in thy sight;* the reason why God did this, was because it was his good pleasure; so then the point standeth faire, in regard of explication; Namely that the offer of grace is free, free in regard of the meanes that God hath appointed, free in regard of the Revelation of the meanes appointed, free in regard of the blessing of the meanes revealed. But you will say, what is the reason of this? by what argument can you proove that the offer of grace is thus free? The reasons briefly are three: First, this offer of grace must needs be free, because there is nothing in man that can purchase this, in the 8 of the *Acts 19. 20.* when *Simon Magnus* saw that the Apostles by laying on of hands conveyed the grace of the Spirit into mens soules, he thought to have gotten a boory, and have done so also, and offered money, that he might receive that gift, but marke how Saint Peter tooke him up with indignation, *Thy money perish with thee, because*



thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter. It was a marvelous fearefull sin, and therefore the Apostle Peter, bad him pray that if it were possible, the thought of his heart might bee forgiven him. It is a vaine thing to conceive, and a great sinne to thinke or imagine, that grace can be purchased from God by any thing that we have received; for there must be some proportion betweene the price, and the thing that is bought in common reason, but in the 3. of the Prov. 14, 15. Salomon saith, *That the Merchandize of Wisedome* (that is, of the wisdom of God, wrought by the Spirit of God) *is better than the Merchandize of silver, and the gaine thereof than fine gold, shee is more pretious than Rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to bee compared unto her.* There is no proportion between any thing and this wisdom; no, no; they that thinke that God loves them any whit the better, because they are rich and learned, and honourable, let them know, that all those things are dung in regard of the graces of Gods Spirit. If any thinke to buy grace they shall perish, and their money with them; for the offer of grace is free.

And secondly, as there is nothing that can purchase grace, so wee can do nothing that can merit grace, for some man may say; however I have no money to purchase it, yet I can worke it out, as poore men use to say to those for whom they worke, when they would have any commodity of them, they tell them they have no money to pay them

them for it, but they will worke it out by their handy labour. But alasle, there is nothing that can bee done of the sinfull sonne of man, that can procure any thing from God this way, as we may see, *Rom. 9.16.* *It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy.* It is not our willing, our working, our running, what ever wee have, or can doe, is nothing for the procuring of grace in this kinde; it is God alone that sheweth mercy. *Thus he will have mercy on whom hee will have mercy, and compassion on whom hee will have compassion, and whom he will he hardneth, Rom. 9.18.* If thou shouldest marke what is done amisse, (saith the Prophet David) who could abide it. If God should enter into judgement with any poore soule upon the earth, there were no living for him, hee could expect nothing but death, and the fierce anger of God continually to pursue him; and therefore farre it is from man to have any thing that can procure grace at the hand of God.

Thirdly, a man naturally hath no ground whereby he can challenge this by way of promise from the Lord, no naturall man hath any promise in this kind, *The promises are Yea and Amen, to them that are in Christ;* to them that are called, and converted and brought home to Christ, to those they are all, *yea, confirmed; and amen, concluded; yea, made; and amen, performed:* but a man by nature can claime nothing at Gods hands but hell and damnation, and therefore all the plagues and punishments that befall wicked men, are the fruits of their owne labours,



hours, they are their owne, they have the fruit of their owne trees; so *Iudas* is said, to goe to his owne place. In the 3. of *Esay*, the 9. there saith the text, *Woe unto the wicked, for they have rewarded euill so their owne soules, the reward of their hands shall be given them, for they shall eate the fruite of their doings.* They can challenge confusion and everlasting destruction, this is their owne; *Iudas* went to his owne, hee had his owne share, and his owne condemnation, they were his owne, his owne finnes procured them: but as for the obtaining of Christ, and of grace and saluation, there is nothing that can doe it, it is of the free mercy and goodnesse of God. *Godlinesse is great guine*, saith the Apostle, *it hath the promise of this life, and of the life to come:* but an ungodly man there is no promise at all made unto him, hee can challenge nothing from God by way of promise, so that by this time wee have the prooffe of the point; namely, *That the offer of grace is altogether free:* for we have nothing can purchase grace, wee can do nothing that can procure grace, wee have no right whereby wee may challenge grace by way of promise naturally, and therefore the case is cleare, *That we have grace freely from the hand of God.* We see the point cleared, the doctrine confirmed and established.

The use of it is two fold, partly to the Saints of God that have received grace: partly to those that want grace.

First, for the Saints of God that have received grace, I beseech you thinke of it, it is a truth that can-

cannot be denied, proved by reason strong, and Scripture plaine; that whatloever wee have from the beginning of conversion, to the end of salvation, is free grace. Why, mee thinkes your hearts should answer, we ought to be stirred up, the more to magnifie the mercy of God, and so much the more to bee thankfull unto him for this mercy which our poore soules have received at his hands: the freer the grace of God is which hee offereth unto us, the greater our thanksgiving, the greater the acknowledgement of the goodnesse of the Lord ought to bee: those whom God hath given any assurance of sound grace; that Christ is there, that salvation is there, they doe not know how much beholding they are to God for the same, for this proceedeth altogether of his free mercy, looke up therefore unto God, and blesse God for it, this is that which did drive the Prophet *Micah* to a stand, *Mica. 7. 18, 19.* there faith he, *Who is a God like unto our God, that pardoneth iniquities, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his people, he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy, he will turne againe, he will have compassion upon us, he will subaue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sinnes into the bottome of the sea;* as who should say, here is a God indeed, who is like our God, who hath pardoned all our sinnes, why? because his mercy pleased him, because hee delighteth in goodnesse, no God like *Iehovah*, no Redeemer like Christ, no Comforter like the Spirit, all sins pardoned, & all iniquities



ties cast into the bottome of the Sea; but what is the ground of all, because his mercy pleased him; as if hee had sayd, Men will doe no good unto us, unlesse they see good in us, unlesse they expect some good and profit from us, but who is like our God, no man is like unto him, hee hath passed by our transgressions, and subdued our iniquities, and given us the graces of his spirit, not because wee pleased him, or did any thing that could deserve this at his hands, but it was his free mercy that moved him, all our peeuvilnesse, all our loosenesse, all our carelesnesse, all our sinnes subdued, and thrust into the bottome of the Sea and pardoned, and why? because wee pleased God? no, because his mercy pleased him; this is God full of grace, full of mercy, full of goodnesse and compassion, no God like our God, no mercy like this; no grace, no goodnesse, no compassion, like unto this, and therefore you poore Saints that have received any grace from the hand of the Lord, goe into some secret place, and say unto your soules, and plead with your owne hearts, and provoke your soules to thanksgiving, for Gods mercy towards you: reason with thy heart, and provoke thy spirit to take notice of Gods mercy, and say, How is it Lord, that many that have lived in the same towne, in the same family, nay the same man that is under the same ministry that I am, that heares the same Sermons that I doe, and sits in the same seate with me, how is it that such a poore man or woman is still in the gall of bitternesse, in the bond

bond of iniquity, still in the snare of death, and under the power of *satan*; Father how comes it? why is it that my mind is enlightned? why was my heart humbled? why didst thou give me any care to walke with thee, and to forsake my sinnes, and abandon my former lusts and corruptions, why is this Lord, it was of thine owne free mercy Lord, for I had nothing which could purchase this at thy hands, I could doe nothing that might procure it; I could claime no promise naturally from thee in this kinde: if thou canst thinke thus, and say thus, goe thy wayes and be as thankfull as thou canst to such a God, that hath done this for thee, and plead with the Lord, as the Prophet *David* did, *What is man that thou shouldst be so mindfull of him, and what is the sonne of man, that thou shouldst regard him;* why Lord? thou mindfull of me when I forgot my selfe, when I ranne headlong into all wickednesse, as prophane as ever any soule was, oh! those dayes which I now remember with griefe of soule, when my heart rose up against thee and thy ministers, and yet thou Lord, mindfull of such a sinfull wretch as I am, that forgot my selfe and my owne salvation, why what am I Lord, and what is this poore soule of mine, that thou shouldest remember me, oh! doe thus and thinke of this, and remember that our Saviour Christ when the Apostles Preached the Gospell, here was a poore man on one side converted, and a poore woman on another, when the Lord Iesus saw this, why *blesse thee Father* saith he *Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast*



revealed these things to the poore of the world, and denied them to great ones; take this to your hearts, the poore receive the Gospell, the rich they are so full and so delighted in these earthly things, here below, that they have no roome for any spirituall grace; but you that are Saints of God, that have received any grace, thinke of this, let your soules blesse God, even extraordinarily, and say, I thanke thee Father, that that thou hast hid these things from the wise, and from the rich, and from the noble, and hast revealed them unto babes, that thou hast taught me, a poore silly creature, that thou hast wrought upon my heart, and shewed me Christ Iesus, when as most in the world have not seene him, nor salvation, many great ones, and mighty ones thou hast sent packing to hell, but me a blind creature, out of a poore cottage, out of a corner of hell, thou hast plucked and given me salvation: Father I blesse thee for this, for it was of thy free mercy. I beseech thee to give me a free heart to blesse thee for this thy wonderfull mercy vouchsafed unto me, and to walke worthy of thee. What, shalt thou give thy selfe freely for my poore soule? and shall not I give thee a good action freely? thus stirre up your owne hearts to blesse God for this his great mercy: the greater the grace is which he vouchsafeth unto you, the greater your thankfulness ought to be: and so much for this use, it should stirre up every poore soule that hath received any grace, to go into a corner, and looke up to heaven, and be amazed at Gods great mercy, and say, Father

ther I have received grace, and why I? there is no reason Lord for it, but because thy mercy pleased thee.

The second use is to the wicked themselves, those that yet want this mercy, to those that are yet in the gall of bitterness, is it so that Gods grace and mercy is altogether free; then this may bee a ground of encouragement unto them to seeke after this mercy: they may thinke with themselves thus, why, the offer of grace is free, and therefore why may not I come to have some of this mercy as well as another; though they are yet in the snare of Satan, under the power of sinne, and in the bond of iniquitie, yet the freeness of Gods mercy may encourage them to seeke to God for this grace, and to sustaine their hearts in some hope that they may obtaine it. Why, it is a free mercy, and therefore why mayst not thou have it as well as another, it is freely given, and why mayst not thou receive it as well as another, it is worth the while to seeke after grace and mercy, for there is some hope and expectation to attaine it; This was the ground why the Prophet *Esay* did perswade all people to come unto the Lord Iesus, *Esay*, 55. 1. Why saith he, *Every one that thirsteth come yee to the waters, and he that hath no money, come yee, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milke without money, and without price: Come you that have no money,* saith the text; the people might make a cavill, and say, Why? wee want money to buy, to what end therefore should we come; the text answers this, and saith, *come you*



*that have no money, and buy without money:* What is the meaning of this, that is, you that have no sufficiency to procure grace and salvation, though you have no ability of your selves to purchase this, yet come and come freely, and *buy without money*, as if he should say, If you will but come and take grace, this is all God looks for, all that the Lord expects and desires, you may have it for the taking, you may receive grace for the carrying of it away, though your weaknesse be great, and your infirmities many, yet if you have but ability to take grace and carry it away, this is enough, this is all that God requires at your hands; and this is that which makes the Saints of God in the 14. of *Hos. 3.* to goe unto God, and renounce all others, there saith the text, *A shur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, Te are our gods;* and what is the ground of all this, *for with thee, the fatherlesse findeth mercy:* so that, hast thou a desolate soule, why, bee of good comfort, and be encouraged to go to God for helpe, for hee doth not succour men because they have strength, but hee helpeth those that are succourlesse.

Art thou fatherlesse, and cast off of the world; hast thou a fatherlesse soule, a motherlesse soule; that is, a hopelesse and a helpelesse soule, that hath no ability to procure mercy, or to purchase grace; why, with God the fatherlesse findeth mercy; and therefore say, Lord, with thee the fatherlesse findeth mercy, I am such a one, therefore Lord I expect

pest mercy from thee. If a great rich man should proclaime, that at such a time every one that will come, may receive dole from him; if this dole now were to bee purchased with money, none but the rich could receive it, but when he saith he will give to every one that comes a dole freely, then the poore may have it as well as the rich, when the dole commeth not to be purchased, but onely to be received, then the begger may have it as well as he that hath money, for the dole is not to bee bought, but to bee received, and therefore every one that hath but a bagge to put it in, and ability to carry it away, may have it; consider this ye that God hath not called home, there is a dole of mercy to be given you from God, and God doth not intend to sell his mercy to you, but to bestow it freely upon you, and therefore if you will but come & receive it, and carry it away, you may have it; God requirs nothing else of you, and therefore comfort your selves and say, Why, this mercy of God is free, others have it, and why not I Lord. Come therefore and waite upon God in his ordinances, thinke with thy selfe that the dole of mercy is to be given at such a place, at such a sermon, and therefore resolve to goe thither, and say, If wisdome, or goodnesse, or understanding, would purchase any thing at Gods hand, then miserable creature that I were, for I have none of those, but the mercy of God is free, there is a dole of mercy freely to be given, and such and such have had it bestowed upon them, and therefore why may not I have it as well as others. And there-



fore naturall men that are burthened with abominations, and full of sinne and corruptions, let them reason with their soules, and say, Why, did God convert *Saul*, call *Abraham*, and humble *Manasses*, why? God did this freely, of his free mercy and goodnesse, did hee? and why then may not I receive this mercy from the hand of the Lord also? and when your owne weakenesses trouble you, and your finnes and infirmities lye fore upon you, why, then helpe your owne soules in this kinde, and say, I can doe nothing that can procure grace, no more could *David*, I have nothing that can purchase favour and mercy at Gods hands, no more had *Saul*, and yet God was mercifull to them: why, hee is as mercifull now as he was then, his goodnesse is not diminished, nor his mercy abated. Lord thou that shewedst mercy to these, shew mercy to mee also; thou that didst blesse these Lord, [blesse mee, even me also. Lord thou bestowest thy mercy freely, I beseech thee therefore bestow one drop upon my poore soule. Aye, but some may cavill now and say, Gods mercy is free, and therefore hee may as well deny it mee as bestow it upon mee. I answer, this is true, hee may deny it thee as well as give it thee, and he may also as well give it thee as deny it thee; it is as possible that thou mayest receive mercy, and therefore try all meanes possible to obtaine it. In the 3. of *Jonah*, the 9. vers. there the people of *Niniveh* say, *Who can tell if God will turne and repent*, The Lord there had sent the Prophet *Jonah*, to prophecy against *Niniveh*, *That within forty*  
dares

dayes it should be destroyed, When the people heard this, there was a fast proclaimed, and every man was commanded to put on sackcloth and cry mightily to the Lord, *for who can tell if God will turne and repent, and turne away from his seirce anger, that we perish not*: as if they should say, We have deserved that this judgement should come upon us, and our sinnes have procured it, *but yet who can tell whether God will turne away from his seirce anger, for the Lord is mercifull, and freely mercifull*: and thus doethon, and say, I confesse God may confound me for my sinnes, but who can tell whether God will have mercy upon me; I confesse that God may harden me, but who can tell whether he will humble mee, I will therefore waite upon him in his ordinances, and try if hee will bee mercifull to my poore soule.

The third use is an use of Exhortation to all poore creatures, that are burthened with the burthen of their sinnes, and are under the power of them, as to bee encouraged to seeke for mercy, and to have some hope to obtaine it, so also with patience to waite and stay the time of the Lord; this should exhort them to come continually into the Congregation of Gods Saints, and waite patiently when, and what God will bestow upon them, according to his good will and pleasure. The mercy and grace which God bestoweth upon any, is a free gift, and therefore if you come into the Assemblies of Gods people, to heare Gods word; if thou waite upon God in his ordinances one day, and have



have not grace granted unto you, nor mercy vouchsafed towards you, if you come the next day and yet have it not, you must still waite and expect because it is a free gift, and therefore as God may give it to whom he will, so also when he will, and therefore murmur not, nor say what shall I come so often, and waite so long, and pray so much, and yet nothing? why? aye it is a free gift, in the 3 of *Lament.* 25. 26. the text saith, *The Lord is good unto them that waite for him*, it is good that a man should both quietly hope, and waite for the salvation of the Lord, as it is with the sea, when it ebbs the water goeth backe, when it flowes and is at the maine it commeth againe: now a man that is to take a journey by sea, if the comming of the tide be not for his turne, and is gone backe, hee must waite untill it commeth againe; so it is with God in this kinde, there is a flow of grace and mercy with him, now sometimes God withdraweth his grace from his poore creatures, but yet let them cry still, and pray still, and resolve so to doe still; doe not say, If God will not succour me, and bestow mercy and grace upon me, now seeing I have waited so long, I will pray no more, I will expect no longer; & will you not so? why? alas who shal have the worst, you will be sure to have the worst of it: you that will be so sturdy, that because God heares not, and helpes not when you will, and when you call, therefore you will pray no more, nor expect no longer; you that say, you have waited thus long and have not had grace nor mercy vouchsafed unto you,

you, and therefore to what end, to what purpose should we waite any longer, or attend any more? why if it be thus with you, you may depart if you please; who thinke you, shall have the worst of it: beggers must not be choosers, this is not begging of mercy but commanding of mercy at Gods hands; this is not to desire that God would give you mercy, but that he would follow you with mercy. Some man may say, What shall I use the meanes so long, pray so often, and heare Sermons so often, and still waite? aye and blesse God that thou mayst waite, blesse God that thou hast not beene long since confounded, that God hath not long before this time sent thee packing to hell, but that thou hast still opportunities, that thou still hast peace and the meanes of Salvation afforded thee: shalt thou waite? aye, and blesse God that thou mayst waite, before *thou goest hence, and bee no more seene*, Psal. 69. 3. there saith the Prophet *David, I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried, mine eyes faile while I waite for my God; as if he had sayd, I have looked this day and heard thy Word, this day I have looked up to heaven in prayer and have not found thee; I wept this day, and mourned this day, I have used all meanes, my eyes even faile with waiting for my God: did David waite thus that was a King? and why mayst not thou waite? why mayst not thou stay looking for the salvation of the Lord, shut downe those proud hearts and lofty spirits of yours which think themselves too good to waite the Lords leisure, and*



reason with your own soules, & say, why is not my heart humbled? why are not my corruptions subdued and abated, as well as others? checke and subdue all those burlings of Spirit in the beginning; see what *Paul* did, when his heart began to grapple with God, why, *who art thou O man*, saith he, *that thou liftest up thy selfe against God*, as it hee had sayd, Art not thou a damned creature, sinfull dust and ashes, why, *who art thou O man that thou shouldst doe thus?* so when thy heart beginneth to rise against God, suppressethole distempers, and say, who art thou damned sinfull soule, that darst thus stand against God? what if I had gone to hell long before this? why, I had had my portion, if I had beene confounded long since, and sent roaring to hell, my sinnes had merited it, and therefore well may I waite for mercy, and thanke God that I may waite: downe with those proud imaginations and lofty thoughts that arise in mans heart, and resolve with *David* to waite for the *Salvation of the Lord*, with God is the gate of mercy, & the fountaine of mercy, and this mercy is free, & therefore use the meanes still though God heare not, pray still though he accept not, resolve though thy heart faile, and thy eyes faile, yet to roule in the dust, and call for mercy, and say Lord thy mercy is free, therefore blesse me Lord even me also.

The conclusion in the text is, that notwithstanding this mercy of God is free, yet a man must have a will to receive grace and mercy, before he can have it, for saith the text, *whoever Will let him take*

take of the water of life freely, and heere we have the reasonablenesse of the condition, together with the universality of it, it is not a great thing that God calleth for, but if a man will have mercy, and grace and Salvation, he shall have it. First; a man must will mercy before hee can have mercy, and whosoever doth will it shall have it, and herein is the universality of the condition; so that the doctrine which ariseth naturally out of the text, and which is the second generall circumstance of preparation is this, *viz.* that the soule must bee willing to receive Christ and grace, before it shall have Christ and grace; God will not save a man against his will, *Rev.* 3, 20. there saith the text, *Behold I stand at the doore and knocke, if any man heare my voyce, and open the doore, I will come in to him, &c.* the doore is the heart, & the knocking is the striving of the Lord in the use of the means, God stands this day & knocks at this and all other the like opportunities, the Lord knockes this day, and will come and knocke againe the next Sabbath, and the next, the next Lecture, and the next opportunity, when the minister comes God comes, when he perswades God perswades, when hee threatens God threatens, when he reprooves God reprooves, sometimes the Lord knocketh at the doore, sometimes hee picketh the locke, thus every way striving to come in, stands thus knocking, and intreating, exhorting, perswading, he knockes with much patience and long suffering, if any man will but open, here is all the Lord



requires, all that he expects and lookes for, the opening of the doore that is all; the doore is the heart, the opening of the doore is the enlarging of the heart to entertaine Christ; if any man will but open now, here is all the Lord desires, hee will come and suppe with that man, and he with him, and in the 16. of *Mat. 24.* there saith our Saviour; *If any man will come after me, let him deny himselfe, and follow me;* what a strange phrase is this, If he will follow me let him, it is a pretty collection of Divines out of that place, that a man must will to follow Christ before he can follow him, the truth is, the will never commeth after the following of God, but if a man hath a heart that way, a will to the businesse, then hee may follow him, then all goes forward cheerefully, this will is the great wheele that turnes all, and the power of the soule, that workes all in this case, and we may observe when the Lord is pleased to prepare a people for ruine, hee then shuts up the doore of their hearts, in the *Acts 28. 27.* there saith the text, *The heart of this people is waxed grosse, and their eares are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and heare with their eares, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heale them;* in the 24. verse saith the text, *some beleevd and some beleevd not,* how comes this to passe now, that some beleevd not, the reason is rendred in the 27. verse, *the heart of this people is waxen fat, or grosse, lest they should be converted, and I should heale them;* it

a soule will be converted, then God will heale it, but if the heart of the people be stopped up, if the heart be fatted up with sinne and corruption, then the Lord will never heale, he will never have mercy upon that soule; eating and sleeping makes a man naturally to be fat and grosse, so it is with the soule, when a mans heart feedes upon his corruptions, when a man lyes securely in his sinnes this fats the soule, and this is the fore-runner of confusion, some beleaved and some beleaved not, why their hearts were fatted up, they had no will to receive Christ and Salvation by him, and therefore looke as it was with the cure of the Lame man *John 5. 6.* our Saviour saith unto him, *wilt thou bee made whole* so it is in spirituall things, the Lord will have a man to will mercy and Salvation by Christ, before he will bestow it upon him, and therefore in the 5 of *John* the 40. the text saith *Ye will not come to me that you may have life*, and this is the reason that they had not life, and that they were not saved, *You would not come that you might have life*, as who should say, You must will to come before you can come to have life, and when you have once got this will, then there is hope that there is life comming; but a man must first *will* life, before he can have life: so that then the point is cleere and evident, namely that a man must *will* to receive the Lord Iesus and grace, before he shall have the Lord Iesus and grace, and Salvation by him: for the further opening of the point, we must observe two passages; first, what is meant by the will?

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secondly, wherein this will discovers it selfe, and by that time we shall have somewhat to hold out selves unto. And first for the former, what is meant by *will* in this place, we must understand that this word *will*, it carryeth a double signification with it. And first it discovers that naturall power and faculty wherewith every man is endued to will, but this is not meant here, *viz.* the very faculty and power wherby a reasonable man is enabled to will, for then every man should have life and salvation, for every man hath this naturall will, for it is with the soule, as with a clocke that runneth the wrong way, and striketh false, it hath the same wheelles like other clocks, but it doth not strike true as other clockes doe, and herein lies the difference, so it is with the nature of man fallen from God, the wheele of his will, that is, the power of his understanding remaineth still, the nature of the soule still existeth, but the quality of it is altered, this naturall faculty of the will is not meant here, for then the devils should be saved, for they have a naturall will, and therefore in the second place, by will in Scripture, we must understand the actions and operations, which proceed from the natural faculty of this will which God hath wrought in us, it implyeth any act issuing from this faculty upon any object; by object is meant any thing that is presented to the soule, and this discovers it selfe generally thus, when the face of the soule turnes it selfe to a thing, and openeth it selfe to receive a thing, to close with, and to catch up a thing, as it is with the hand of the body

body! so it is with the will, which is the hand of the soule, every man hath hands, but if these hands of his be bound together, he is not able to lay hold on any thing, but as a man hath a hand that he may lay hold of a thing, so he must have his hands at liberty, and he must open them, that so he may take hold of it, or else he cannot lay hold upon it, so it is with the hand of the soule, this will is the hand of the soule, a man must therefore turne his will towards a thing and open it selfe, the hand of the soule must be open before it can close with and fasten upon a thing, and this is meant here; when the heart which is turned towards grace, and when the soule opens the hand thereof to catch at grace, and lay hold thereupon, then it wills to receive grace, when as wee are unwilling to receive a thing, wee then turne away our hearts from the thing, as children use to speake, if you presse any thing upon them, which they doe not like, but is displeasing unto them, they say, they will not have it, they will not, the soule shuts it selfe against that thing, it turnes away from that thing, and casteth out that thing which is displeasing unto it, so it is with that will of the soule, when the soule is unwilling to receive any thing, it shuts it selfe against that thing, and will by no means receive it, *Exodus the 7. Chapter, 13, 14. verses.* There the Text saith, *The Lord hardened Pharaohs heart, that he hardened not unto them, as the Lord had said, and the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaohs heart is hardened,*

Exo. 7. 13, 14.



*hardned, he refuseth to let the people goe, he hardned his heart, that is, he shut his soule against the commandment of the Lord, and against the advice of Moses, and he would not let the people goe, hee would not take hold of the Command of God to performe it, hee clasped his heart together as it were, that his heart might not fasten upon Gods Commandment, so that by will here is meant, not onely the bare power and faculty of the naturall will, but also the act of this power, when the soule is towards grace, when the hand of the soule is turned towards God, when it opens it selfe to entertaine grace; this is meant by will in phrase of Scripture.*

The second thing considerable is, how this act of the Will? how this opening of the soule doth discover it selfe? how a man shall come to know when he wills grace?

I answered, that this same turning of the Soule to grace, discovers it selfe in three particular passages; the first is this: A man is then sayd to will a thing, when he apprehends the price of a thing, and hath a high esteeme of a thing, according to the price of the thing, and the excellency which is in the thing; for it is a rule in naturall Philosophy, and reason telleth us thus much, that no man wills a thing, unlesse he apprehends the thing <sup>wh</sup> he willeth to be good, either good indeed, or else seemingly good; for no man willeth his own hurt, for if he did nature would destroy it selfe, every thing therefore desires the preservation of it selfe, and therefore  
what-

whatsoever is suggested as evill unto the soule of man it will not close with that evill, but turneth from this evill, if it apprehend it as an evill, hence it is that a proud heart loveth proud courtes, a covetous heart covetous courtes, a malicious heart malicious courtes and practises, namely because the soule apprehends these as good though in themselves they be evill, yet the soule takes them to be best for it, now as the soule must apprehend some good in a thing before it can will and desire it, so it must apprehend the excellency of it before it can will it truely, this is that which carryeth the will of a man unto a thing, the will will never otherwise entertaine a thing. The 3<sup>d</sup>. thing wherein the act of the will is scene, and wherein it makes knowne it self is this, when the soule seeth the good which is in a thing, and apprehends the excellency thereof, so the second thing wherein this act of the will is discovered is this, the soule chooseth that good which before it hath scene, and the excellency of the thing which it hath apprehended, answerable to the nature of the good, and the excellency thereof, the soule it chooseth that good which before it hath esteemed, it takes it to it selfe, as who should say, I wil have this thing not another, & mark when the soule chooseth any good, it maketh such choyse of it, as may be answerable to the nature of the good which it esteemeth, as things of greater worth, a man chooseth with greater affection, things of lesser worth, with lesser affection, he will choose the best things in the first place, and those of lesse



value in the second, as suppose a man choose a woman to be his wife, if he doth not choose her for her grace & for her goodnes, so much as for beauty or wealth, he doth not now choose the woman upon the point, but her beauty and wealth, because he chooseth them in the first place, and with greater affection; so that a man is then sayd to will a thing, when he doth not onely see and apprehend a thing to be good and excellent, but also makes choysc of that thing, according to the goodnesse and excellency thereof.

Thirdly, he that truly willeth a thing, doth not onely apprehend the goodnesse and the price of the thing which he willeth, and chooseth it according to the price and excellency thereof, but in the third place, the heart giveth up it selfe unto that thing which it hath chosen. A man chooseth a wife a right, he will have the woman whom he hath chosen, take that possession of his heart as becommeth a wife in that case, otherwise if a man say, he choose such a man to be king over him, and will not give up his obedience unto him, nor suffer him to exercise authority over him, this man doth not choose him as a king, but rather as a servant, so that to gather up all, a man is then sayd to will a thing, when he apprehends the goodnesse and excellency of the thing, when hee chooseth that thing answerable to the goodnesse and excellency of it. Thirdly, when the heart giveth up it selfe to that thing; now to apply th particulars, when is a man sayd to will Christ, and grace, and Salvation

tion by him, a man must will grace, before he can have grace: but how shall a man come to know when he wills grace? I answer, first when the soule of a poore Christian seeth an excellency in Christ, when he holdeth the Lord Iesus at a high rate, when he hath him in an high estimation, answerable to the worth of him, when a poore soule can put a price upon the Lord Iesus, answerable to the sufficiency that is in him, and agreeable to the grace and goodnesse that is in him, then the soule doth partly Will the Lord Iesus, and grace and Salvation by him; when the soule is able to see a greater good in the Lord Iesus, and have a greater esteeme of the grace which is in him, when it can set a higher rate upon the goodnesse which proceeds from him, than upon any thing else in the world whatsoever, when he hath the Lord Iesus in higher estimation than riches, or honour, or preferment; than of riches that may advance him, or of honour that may promote him, when he esteemes Christ above any thing that the world can afford, or the heart desire, then he partly willeth Christ and grace, the soule will never will a thing truly, but when he seeth some good in the thing, and hath an high estimation of it according to the goodnesse thereof, Col. 3. 11. there faith the text, *Christ is all in all*, when a soule can say that *Christ is all in all*, that it desires nothing else, then this is the value of him, many will be content to have Christ, but they doe not count him worthy great price, but they that will truly will Christ

Col. 3. 11.



must know and apprehend the excellency that is in Christ, and esteeme him answerably thereunto, as you may see in the third chap. of the *Lament.* and 24. verse, there saith the text, *The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him,* now a mans portion is his chiefest good, and *David* also saith, thy Commandements have I chosen as mine inheritance, that is, as the chiefest good that could befall me, or be received of me: So when the soule can truly apprehend that Christ is the better part, when the soule can say it is not necessary to bee rich, it is not necessary to be learned, it is not necessary to be honourable, nor to have pleasure or delight, but it is necessary to have Christ, it is necessary to have grace, it is necessary to have sinnes pardoned, when wee can say Christ is our portion and our inheritance, when we can see the excellency that is in him, and can set a price upon him answerable thereunto, then we are sayd to will Christ in the first place.

The second thing whereby a man may know whether he wills Christ or no, is this, when the soule seeth as the Church in the *Canticles*, that all pleasantnesse is in Christ, when it seeth that he is better than friends, better than riches, better than heath and liberty, when the soule, as it setteth an high price upon Christ: So in the second place can choose Christ answerable to that price it sets upon him, when it can choose him above all things; let the world goe, that takes Christ to it selfe,

let friends goe, that takes Christ to it selfe, that chooseth Christ above all things, when the soule can doe this, then it may be sayd to will the Lord Iesus; the Phrases of Scripture are very sweete in this kind, in the 37 Psalme, the Prophet David there is troubled with the things here below, and his soule almost staggered when he saw the wicked prosper in the world, and increase in riches, *In vaine saith he have I washed my hands in innocency, for the wicked they have what they can desire, their eyes start out with fatnesse, and they have more than heart can wish, but all the day long I have beene plagued and chastened every morning, but when hee went into the Sanctuary, and knew their end, how God did set them in slippery places, and did cast them downe into a destruction, when he saw that his portion was better than theirs, then hee cryed out, Whom have I in heaven but thee, and who is there in earth, that I desire in comparison of thee, as who should say, take your gold give mee Christ, take your pelfe give mee grace, Whom have I in heaven but thee, then the heart chooseth God, when it thinketh better of God than of all other things whatsoever, Who have I in heaven but thee, and who is there in earth as I desire in comparison of thee, and therefore in the last verse of that Psalme hee saith, It is good for me to draw nigh to God, as who should say let the covetous man have his money and pelfe, and let the ambitious man have his honours and preferments, but it is good for my soule to draw neere*



Heb. 11. 24.

to the Lord, and therefore it is sayd, *Heb. 11. 24.* that *Moses* when he was come to yeaues, he refus'd to be called the Sonne of Pharaons daughtery, choosinge rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sinne for a season, as who should say, Let me suffer persecution, let me have neither coate to my backe, nor meate to my belly, let me dye in prison, let me undergoe any crosse or calamity, give me but Christ and I care not whatsoever becomes of me, this is to will Christ Iesus, when a man cares not what becomes of all other things whatsoever, so he may but enjoy Christ; he wils a good truly that wils a good in order, as if it be the chiefest good, if I will will it truly I must will it and desire it in the first place: so when I can hold Christ at a high value, above all things, and my soule can choose him above all things, then I am sayd to will Christ, in the 10. of *Luke* and last verse, there saith our Saviour, *Mary* is troubled about many things, but *Mary* hath chosyn the better part, she chose this and let all other things alone: he that chooseth a wife, he is not said to choose her, unlesse he choose her to be in that place which best befits her, he that saith hee chooseth a wife, and keepe a whore, he maketh not her his wife truly so it is with the soule, though it see an excellency in Christ, yet if it choose not Christ in ranke and order, as the chiefest good, and in the first place, it doth not truly will Christ Iesus, and this is the second thing, wherein the willing of Christ is discovered, namely when the soule chooseth

chooseth Christ in the first place, answerable to the excellency that is in him.

Thirdly, when the soule hath prized Christ above all, and chosen him above all, so in the third place, if the soule truly will Christ Iesus, it will be carried towards Christ, to close with him, never to sever from him againe, for he is said to will a thing that closeth with it, and will never part from it, as for example, he that will buy house and land, and make it his owne for ever, he first chooseth that house and land, and then hee resolves to keepe it for ever, and never part with it againe, and if hee part from it, or sell it againe, then he is sayd to refuse it, as well as to choose it, and the stomach that chooseth meate, when it hath such liking to any dyet, that it openeth it selfe and receiveth it, and closeth with it, then we are sayd to will and choose Christ, when we see the worth of Christ, and take him before all, and fasten upon him to make him our owne for ever, when wee take such delight in him, that we will not be freed from him, but desire that he may be for our soules, and our soules for him forever, this is to will the Lord Iesus. So then to gather up all, when the soule prizeth Christ as the chiefest of all, when it chooseth him above all, when the soule answerably giveth up it selfe to Christ, that Christ may take possession of it, and never sever from it, then a man doth will Christ Iesus heartily. So that by this time we see the nature of the point, and the English of the Doctrine is thus much, the soule that seeth the worth



worth of Christ, and chooseth him above all things, and closeth with him, that soule willeth Christ Iesus: But now heere a question may arise, you may ask mee whether a man can will Christ and grace, thus naturally out of the power of nature? I answer no, it is beyond the power of man, to will Christ and grace naturally, it is the free gift of God; as it is the Lord which must give grace, so it is the Lord that must give the will to receive grace, what availeth all the water in the Sea, if we have no vessell to receive it? what avayleth it to have meate, if wee have no stomach to digest it? what avayleth it to have the fountaine of grace set open unto us, if we have no vessels, no hearts to receive it, if we have no stomach to digest it? all is worth nothing, & therfore the doctrine of the Scripture is compared to raine, the raine which falleth upon a rock remaineth not, but presently slides off; so it is here, the fountaine of grace is set open to every one that heareth the Word this day, but if you have no vessels to receive, no wills to embrace it, no heart to entertaine it, all this mercy of God, grace of God, love of God, will fall downe at your feete, you may carry away some words in your mouthes, but unlesse you have a will to receive grace, it will never dwell in your hearts, it is impossible that the soule should receive grace and Salvation by the Lord Iesu; unlesse it hath a will to entertaine him, for common sence telleth us, that those actions that have relation one to another cannot bee done

know

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one without the other; no man can buy, unless another will sell; no man can take or receive any thing, unless another will give it and bestow it upon him: Christ cannot be bestowed upon us, and given unto us, unless we have a will to receive him; there is no giving of a thing, unless there be a taking and receiving of it: Christ will not be a guest with us, unless he be entertained by us. If a man should come unto an Inne and aske for lodging, if the Host of the Inne tell him that the Inne is full, and there is no roome for him, and thereupon hee goes his way, this man cannot be sayd to be a guest unto that Inne, but that hee onely offered himselfe to be a guest; so it is here, there is no soule that ever can or shall receive Christ as a guest to himselfe, unless he be content to make roome for Christ, and bee a receiver of him, Christ will never come with salvation or comfort unto thy heart, unless thou hast a will to entertaine him: if our willing of Christ bee that which makes roome for Christ, then it must go before the entertaining of Christ; but the willing of Christ is that which makes roome for Christ, and therefore it must goe before the entertaining of him. So then the case is cleare, and the point evident, that a man must will to receive Christ before hee shall have Christ and grace and salvation by him.

The use of the point is threefold, the first is for reproofe, must a man have a will to receive Christ and grace, before hee can receive Christ and grace, then this condemneth that carnall conceit of a



company of poore deluded persons in the world that thinke they may receive grace upon other conditions than the word hath revealed, upon other conditions than Christ ever made agreement with them; this conceit it is mervailous common, it is a generall fault in all carnall professors, they thinke to goe to heaven, nay, they make no doubt of it, they thinke they have grace, and why? because they say so, and professe so, and therefore it must needs be so; because a man can say hee beleeves, and would have grace, and wilsto receive Christ, therefore out of all question it must needs be so, grace must needs be given them, they cannot be without grace, because they say they have it; and if a man presse upon them, and say, the truth is, the world knowes it, that you live in base courses, a common swearer you are, a covetous wretch, a base usurer, that loves your money more than God; true say they, all flesh is grasse, and in many things we sinne, the Lord give us of his grace, and forgive us our sinnes, and I hope he will doe so, and this will make up the breach presently, nothing but repent, and say Lord have mercy upon us, and then all will be well, it is true, if you can but truly repent, all will be well indeede, your sinnes shall bee forgiven you; but now you talke of cost, you must do more than say so, you must do so likewise; but thus a thousand poore soules goe to hell hoodwinckt after this fashion, they have invented a shorter cut to heaven, they have invented a new way, a backe doore to heaven and happinesse more than

than the word ever discovered. But let any soule make this conceit good in Scripture, and then I will beleeeve them, but if it be so that they cannot make it good by the word of God; then know that if you continue in it, your soules will be damned. Is it thus in the word, hee that faith hee hath grace hath grace, if a man professe grace he cannot bee without grace, no, no, it is not thus in Scripture, the text faith, *He that wils grace*, that is hee that hath a heart to receive grace, he shall have grace, not hee that faith and professeth that he hath grace, but hee that wils it: you must not bring your tongues to talke of grace, and your heads to thinke of grace, but you must bring your hearts to will grace, otherwise you never shall, you never can receive grace; and yet notwithstanding, what is that which carryeth away men in the world; they are naught and wicked, reprove them for it, they heale all, and make up all presently, they beleeeve in Christ, and they repent them of their sinnes, and shall not they bee saved? They say indeede that they doe beleeeve, and they doe repent, but the text faith, they doe not so, and the Lord in his word faith, it is not talke, it is not wishes, but it is the willing of Christ and grace that will obtaine grace. In the 15 of *Mathew*, Mat. 15. 8, 9. and the 8, and 9, *verses*, there faith the text, *In vaine doe these men worshippe mee, for they draw nigh unto mee with their mouth, and benour mee with their lippes, but their heart is farre from me, they draw neere Christ with their lippes, that is, they*



speake as good words as can bee, they say they are sinners, and that the Lord came to save sinners, and they are humbled for their finnes, and attend their Church diligently, and hurt no body, *But their hearts are from me, saith the text, why, because their hearts are still upon their finnes;* they are as proud as ever, as ignorant as ever, as vaine as ever, their hearts still runne after fustill courses, and wicked practises, and therefore away with this talke, and such vaine pretences as men make in this case, unless your hearts goe together with your words, all is worth nothing: what a fond imagination is this, that a man should thinke his words should doe him good, when his heart goeth against them; when their mouthes professe Christ, and their hearts oppose Christ: Thou sayest thou prizest Christ above all things, and yet thou wilt not lose a base sinne for Christ, thou wilt not forsake any wicked lust or corruption for Christ; you will say you prize Christ above all, and yet many of your prophane drunkards will not lose a cup for Christ; nay, you will not lose any base custome for Christ, you were prophane and you will be so still, you were proud and you will bee so still; thy heart and thy words doe not goe together, and therefore never thinke that thy words will save thee: Thou sayest thou beleevest, but thy heart saith the contrary: thou professest thou hast grace, but thy heart denieth it; and therefore it is a very foolish conceit to thinke thy words will doe thee any good, when thy heart denieth what thy tongue professeth: goe home

honest therefore and examine your owne hearts, and thinke thus with your selves; I have talked much, and I have said that I had faith and grace, but oh wretch that I am! my heart saith the contrary. What a wretch am I, doe I thinke that God will have mercy on mee, because I say and professe that I am a sinner, and because I say that I pray unto God for the forgiveness of my finnes; no, no, those very words will condemne me, because my heart goes not with my words, it had beene farre better for these men that they never had spoke these things, for these very words will rise up in judgement against them, nay these words will keep them from the true willing of grace, for they thinke they have it already, because they say they have it, this is a very dangerous conceit, and therefore know that words will not carry all away, to say we repent and beleeve and have grace, these doe us no good at all, wee must will grace before wee shall have grace, but this is not a willing but onely a talking of grace.

The second use is a word of terror, to shake the hearts of all wretched sinfull creatures under heaven, those whom wee may condemne out of their owne mouthes, they professe they will not have grace, and therefore wee may conclude they never shall have grace, their owne words will witness against them; for when the Ministers *lift up their voyces like a Trumpet*, and cry night and day, and call upon them, *this is the good and ancient way walke in this way*, in the way of faith and repentance; what



answer doe men give, they openly professe they will not doe this, they will not walke in this way: The Lord tendereth grace, happinesse, and salvation unto us, and yet many do professe they will not come, they will not attend upon God in his ordinances, they will not embrace, nor they will not entertaine Christ and grace and salvation, they will not come to the meanes of grace and therefore they shall never have grace, they never shall bee made partakers of it. A man must *will* grace, before he can have grace, but you will it not, you desire it not, and therefore as sure as the Lord liveth, you cannot have it.

Another generation there is, that come to the house of God, and sit as Gods people do, and heare as Gods people doe, *but their hearts runneth after their covetousnesse*; when in your soules you can say, our bodies are here indeed, but our hearts are after our lusts and corruptions, after our profits and pleasures; if it be thus with you, then still you resolve that your hearts shall not will the grace of God, and therefore it is cleare and evident, that you have not yet received grace. Men resolve to doe as they did in the 18 of the Prophecy of *Ieremie*, verse, 12. *They said, there is no hope, but wee will walke every one after our owne devices, and doe the imaginations of our evill heart.* When the Lord called upon them to walke in the good way, oh they would none of that! but they would walke after the imaginations of their hearts. And did these spirits thinke yee dye in those times, are not some

Jer. 18. 12.

some such now among us in these times, wherein men say, wee will not reforme our families, nor wee will not pray with them, wee will not keepe the Sabbaths, nor wee will not leave our swearing and our swaggering; our pride and our covetousnesse; no, all the Ministers under heaven shall not perswade us, wee will take up our owne lewd and wicked courses, we will bee prophane still, and wee will sweare still, wee will not amend our lives, nor reforme our families; in what a miserable accursed damnable estate are those men, they will not leave and forsake their lewd practises, and therefore they cannot will grace, and if they cannot will it, then we may certainly conclude, they shall never obtaine it. But you will say, you would leave your wicked courses, and reforme your families if you could doe it, but you cannot. I answer, is it not in your power to plucke your children and your servants into the Lords house on the Sabbath day, is it not in your power to use the meanes whereby you may reforme your lives? you can doe it, but you will not doe it, you will take up your owne wayes, and your owne practises, and therefore the case is plaine, you will not take Christ, and therefore you shall never have him, and Salvation by him, there is also a cursed kinde of Hypocrites which professe faire, and much, they say they will doe for the Lord Iesus, but they are like unto those in the 42. of *Jeremy*, the 30. verse, marke what the

*Ier. 24. 20.*



text saith there, *I see dissimbled in your hearts, when you sent me to the Lord our God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God, and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will doe it.* So there are many that make a faire outside, and will take up holy duties, and they will be professing, and talking of God, but there must be more than this, there must be a willing of grace besides a professing of grace; you pretend faire, and promise this, and purpose that, but when it cometh to you, you fly off, and you will have your owne liberty, your heart is double, you say you will reforme your wayes, and yet you will be idle still, and loose still, and therefore you never yet willed Christ, you never yet prized him aright, you never truly chose him, and therefore as sure as the Lord liveth Christ is not yours, if the condition bee not performed by you, you shall never bee made partakers of that which is promised upon the performance of that condition: if you will Christ and grace, then indeed you have Christ and grace, but you never willed Christ, and therefore it is evident, you never had Christ. In the 29. of Deut. 4. vers. there saith the text, *The Lord hath shewed you great wonders, and discovered many mercies unto you, and yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and eares to heare, unto this very day, and therefore go home and mourne for your selves, and reason with your soules, and say, what, after all our profession, bearing, praying, talking; after all the cost and care that God hath bestowed upon us,*  
have

Deut. 29. 4.

have we not yet a heart to will grace and desire the Lord Iesus, many mercies have beene vouchsafed unto us, many judgements removed from us, there is no nation that God hath dealt so mercifully with, as with us; we have peace yet, and the Gospell yet, and prosperity yet, and yet for all this to this very day, God hath not given us a heart to receive grace, and the things belonging to our everlasting peace, and therefore wives mourne for your husbands in secret, and say, oh my husband, what hath not God yet given thee a heart to feare him, and fathers mourne for your children, that are not yet in the state of grace, and say oh my sonne not yet a heart that God hath given thee to sanctifie a Sabbath, and to leave off thy wicked courses; and friends mourne you also one for another, and say, oh my friend what not yet a heart to humble thy selfe, and to feare the name of God, thus mourne in secret, and say, God hath done this and this for thee, and hast thou not yet a heart, not yet a will to entertaine Christ the world carries all, pleasure carries all, profit beares all away, malice carries away all. The promises and Commandements of God are despised, and hast thou not yet a heart to beleieve the promises, and prize the Lawes of God above liberty and peace profit and pleasure; there is nothing wanting on Gods part, hee gives peace still, and the Gospell still, and yet not a heart all this while to feare God, and keepe his Commandements; thou hast a good house and good land, and many mercies are vouchsafed unto

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thee and not yet a good heart what a misery is this, not yet a will to embrace Christ, and receive grace, why what a lamentable condition is this? and therefore in the last place it is a word of Exhortation to every soule here present, to labour now to begin at the right end, and take a right course, and follow the path that God hath chalked out unto us, in a word, we see it is come to this passe that all is grown to an outside, every man must be a Christian & go to heaven, and all the argument is this, because a man can talke well of religion; but this is not the right way, the willing of grace must goe before the receiving of grace, and therefore go home and examine your selves whether grace bee truly wrought and fashioned in you or no, and reason thus, with your owne hearts, and say, it is not enough to bring my mouth and profession to the Word of the, Lord but heart what sayest thou? in the meane time, I can talke of religion and many good matters, but will what sayst thou? in the meane time, dost thou prize Christ above all things, dost thou choose Christ and grace above all other things in the world whatsoever? heart what sayst thou? dost thou open thy selfe and close with him, and dost thou purpose never to forsake him? in the 32 of Deut. 42. there saith Moses to the people, *Set your hearts to all the words which I testifie among you this day, for it is not a vaine thing for you because it is your life, and through this thing you shall prolong your dayes,* so say I set your hearts to the word, labour to set your soules to the word of

of God, for it is not a vaine word, it is your life and length of your daies, it is not talking of Christ, but it is the willing of Christ, from the heart that will obtaine Christ and Salvation by him.

We have spoken already of the reasonableness of the condition, whosoever will may receive grace, and that freely; and now we come to the universality of it, the work of the Spirit is tendered to every one, whosoever will give way thus unto it grace is set open to all, and proclaimed to all that will take it upon those termes before spoken of, & therefore saith the Text, *Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life*, the word in the originall is, *every willing man*, there is no man exempted, no man debarred, no man hindred to take grace upon those termes, if he will condescend to Gods conditions, be he what he will be naturally, either in regard of sins and corruptions, or in regard of poverty, or infirmities, whatsoever his naturall condition be, yet if he wil but agree to Gods conditions, if he will but choose and prize Christ above all other things, he shall receive him, and grace, and salvation by him, so that the doctrine is this, Whosoever in truth doth will to have Christ shall receive him, and salvation by him, the Text doth not say, Whosoever saith Lord, Lord, shall have Christ and grace, but the willing soule, he shall have him, not the talking man, nor the presuming man, nor the glorying man, but the willing man, so that this is the point, Whosoever in good earnest and in truth will have Christ, shall receive Christ and salvation by him, in the 10. of *Luke* ver. 5, 6. when our Savi- Luke 10. 5, 6.



our Christ sent out his Disciples to prepare way for himselfe, he saith, *into what house soever ye enter, say first, peace be unto this house, and if the sonne of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it, if not, it shall turne to you againe.* By peace is meant here, all prosperity whatsoever, all good, temporall and eternall, it was the manner of the salutation of the Hebrews to say, Peace be unto you, therein including all good things whatsoever, now saith the Text, *if the house be worthy, that is, if the house be truly disposed if the son of peace be there, that is, he which hath a soule so disposed towards peace, as a Son is towards his Father, that is, he that desires peace, upon that Soule peace shall rest, a blessing shall be upon that soule, but if the house be not worthy, that is, if the heart will not receive the Gospell of Salvation, if the Sonne of peace be not there, if he be a rebell against God, and against peace in this kind, then let your peace returne to you againe, there is no footing for Salvation in the soule of that man that refuseth the Gospell, and the meanes of Salvation which God hath tendered, and as our Saviour Christ, before he comes in doth knocke at the doore that he may come in, so whensoever the doore is opened, he will come in, Reve. 3. 20. there saith the Text, *Behold I stand at the doore and knocke, if any man will heare my voice and open the doore, I will come in to him, and suppe with him, and he with me.* The doore is the heart, if the doore be opened, if the will be opened to prize and entertaine Christ, then Christ and his Father will come into that soule, and dwell with it for ever, and refresh it with all*

Reve. 3. 20.

all spirituall comfort, and in the 15. of *Luke*, the <sup>Luk. 15. 17.</sup> 17, and 18, *verses*, when the Prodigall sonne was <sup>18.</sup> returning to his Father, when hee saw that hee was in misery, and how the case stood with him, no body succoured nor releevd him, he returned to himselfe saith the text, and reasoneth thus with himselfe, *How many hired servants in my fathers house have bread enough and to spare, but I perish with hunger, as who should say, Now I know what it is to be in a fathers family, here no man considers mee, no man regards me or respects me; and though I be a sonne, yet there are many in my fathers house which are but servants, which have bread enough, but I though a sonne, have want of all things, and am ready to famish; here is the prize now that hee putteth upon a fathers house, hee thinkes now it is good to be in a fathers house; hee thinks now, oh the provision and love of a father! happy are they that have it, blessed are they that doe enjoy it; and when hee had set this prize upon his fathers house, Then he ariseth and saith, I will go to my Father, and say, Father I have sinned against heaven and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy sonne, make me as one of thy hyred servants. Then the soule doth put a prize upon Christ, and returneth to him, when it seeth the excellency that is in him. The father of the Prodigall sonne, when he saw this, that his sonne returned unto him, and humbled himselfe, and confessed his fau't, he made much of him. The Prodigall had a purpose, a will, a desire to come to his father, And as soone as his father saw him as a*



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off, he went out to meeke him, and fell on his necke and  
 kissed him, and made much of him, and commanded to  
 bring forth the best robe & put it on him, & put a ring  
 on his hand, and shooes on his feet. The Prodigall is a  
 sinner, and hee that is enlightened so farre forth as to  
 see his wretchednesse, and is able to set a prize upon  
 the mercy of Christ; hee that hath runne away  
 from God, the base sinfull wretch that never made  
 any account of the word, if the Lord hath awaked  
 his heart, so farre forth as that hee can set a high  
 prize upon the word, and say, I wondered hereto-  
 fore to see men runne to sermons so fast, and make  
 such hast to the house of God when the bells ring,  
 woe is me I could never doe so! but oh happy are  
 they! and blessed are they that did so! oh one pro-  
 mise now is worth a world, now the assurance of  
 the forgivenesse of sinnes is worth all the world  
 besides; when the soule of a poore sinner begins  
 thus to prize Christ, and resolves to go to Christ,  
 and expects mercy from him, then the Lord seeth  
 this soule as farre off, and is resolved to give enter-  
 tainment to it, & to afford comfort thereunto. But  
 you will say, what is the reason of it, that if a man  
 wils Christ and salvation he shall have it. I answer,  
 the reasons hereof are three. The first is this, be-  
 cause the Lord requires no more at the hands of a  
 poore sinner, nay, the Lord Iesus is fully conten-  
 ted when the soule commeth to give enter-  
 tainment to him, this alone will give contentment  
 wholly to the Lord Iesus Christ. It is the meaning  
 of that speech of the Wiseman, in the *Prov.* *Chap.*

sonne,

sonne, give me thy heart: by heart in that place, is not meant the substance of the soule as it was created of God, this is not that which God looketh for; but *My sonne, give me thy heart*, that is, let the actions of thy heart bee set upon mee; prize mee, and choose me, this is that with which the Lord is contented, nay, it is the maine thing with which the Lord is fully pleased. In the 5. of *Deut. 29.* when Deut. 5:29.] the people heard the voyce of *Moses*, and were resolved to yeeld obedience to Gods Commandments, they sayd, *Whatsoever the Lord hath spoken by thee, that will we doe*: when the Lord heard that they would attend and obey his word which heeooke by his servant *Moses*, these are very good words, saith the Lord, *But oh that there were such a heart in them to feare mee and keepe my Commandments alwayes, that it might bee well with them, and with their children for ever.* God hee tooke their outward profession and appearance in good part, but oh that there were such a heart: this strikes all dead, this gives God full content, and therefore we shall observe, that when all other things are weak in us, though there be many failings, and many distempers in a poore soule, yet when the heart is sound and sincere, that is that which giveth the Lord full contentment, hee goeth away fully satisfied with that. In the 2. of *Chron. 15. 17.* there the 2 Chron. 15:17 text saith of *Asa*, that hee did not take away the high places out of *Israel*, nevertheless the heart of *Asa* was perfect all his dayes: though he failed in many things, yet his heart was perfect and upright, and this the Lord accepted. Se-



21 Secondly, as God onely requires this, namely, the willing and choosing and prizing of Christ, so also by this worke of the soule, a poore sinner comes to bee inabled to close with God; it is the will that is the maine thing whereby wee are fitted to close and lay hold of God, and to fasten with the Lord Iesus, for it is a rule which we have in naturall causes, that all good properly is the object of the will of a man, truth is the object of the understanding, but the object of the will is good; looke as it is with the body of a man, it hath severall senses, and those senses have severall operations about which they are exercised; as the eye, that seeth colours; the eare heareth sounds, and the tongue that relisheth the meate a man eateth; now all these have severall things about which they are exercised, and they are not able to reach one unto the worke of another, as the eye cannot heare sounds, nor the eare discern of colours, and neither of these can taste or relish any goodnesse in that which a man eateth; but the eye that seeth, and the eare that heareth, and the tongue that onely is exercised about tasting; every one of these have severall operations; so it is here, all things are made for man, the body for the soule, the understanding for the will, and the will for God; the understanding that seeth truths, and discernes the excellency that is in God, but there is nothing that relisheth and tasteth the goodnesse which is in God but the will: so that, looke as the eye cannot heare, nor the eare see, and neither of these can relish any

goodnesse in the meate a man eateth, but this is proper to the tongue onely, so there is nothing in a man that is able to relish and receive the goodnesse or the mercy of the Lord, but the will of a man, all things are made for man, the body for the soule, the understanding for the will, and the will for God: the understanding is the Councellor that seeth all, but the will is the Queene of the soule, that taketh all that good which the understanding seeth and discerneth, and which is offered and tendered unto it. In the 1 of *Hosea*, and the beginning, this was the ground why the repentant Church came home to God, it is in the 2 of *Hos.* 7. there saith the text, *She shall follow after her lovers, but shall not overtake them, and she shall seeke them, but she shall not finde them, then shall she say, I will returne unto my first husband, for it was better with me than, than it is now: she would returne to her first husband,* she would give entertainment to the Lord, why, what is the reason of this: why saith she, *it was better with me than, than it is now;* when the soule can see that it is better to performe the holy services which God requites, than enjoy all the things of the world, when it can say it is better to be with God than any where else, then it returneth to Christ, and this is the reason, why a reasonable creature onely is able to receive grace and salvation, reasonable creatures onely can receive it, because they onely have to receive it, so that we see the willingnesse of the soule is the heart, whereby we lay hold upon the Lord Iesus,

I where-



whereby our soules are inabled to close with the graces and goodnesse of God.

The third reason is this, because the want of this same willingnesse and heart to receive and embrace Christ and grace, is that which breaketh the match betweene God and the soule; it is a point of some weighty consideration, there is no lacke on Gods part, there is no failings on Gods side which may hinder or debarre a poore soule from receiving the Lord Iesus Christ; the fault is our owne and lyeth at home, for God commandeth all to believe in Christ, nay he beseecheth and intreateth them that they would receive the Lord Iesus Christ and comfort and salvation by him; nay it cannot be, because God is just and holy, but he must will that the soule should receive the Lord Iesus and beleve in him, and bee willing to give entertainement to him in this case: So that it is evident that there is no backwardnesse on Gods part, God doth freely will that every soule that heareth the Word of God and hath Christ offered, that they should receive the Lord Iesus and benefit thereby, and comfort there from to their soules; but the failing is onely in our part, wee have not a will to receive Christ Iesus when hee is offered, and give entertainement to him, and this is that which breedeth the jarre betweene God and our soules, it is not want of obedience to the Commandements of God that will condemne, if the soule be but contented to receive Christ and entertaine the worke of grace, but this

this is that which breaketh the match, and maketh a separation betweene the soule and God, because men will not entertaine that grace nor embrace that faith which should procure the forgiveness of their sinnes. A man may be saved though hee doe not keepe the Commandements of God so perfectly as God required *Adam* should doe, for God sayd unto *Adam*, *Doe this and live*, but though a man doe not so now he may live, but a man cannot live unlesse hee beleewe in Christ, and have a will to receive Christ Iesus. The first covenant that God made with *Adam* was doe and live, because he created him after his owne Image, in righteousness and true holinesse, and made him able to performe obedience to all his commandements, but though we have never so many weaknesses, never so many infirmities and sins, yet if wee will but be content to receive Christ Iesus and grace from him, all our weaknesses shall be strengthened, our wants supplied, and our sinnes pardoned, but when a man commeth to this passe that hee is naught in himselfe, and will not take Christ to be made better, then hee must needs perish and come unto everlasting destruction; and this is that which breaketh the match and breedeth the opposition betweene God and the soule, *Matth. 23. 37, 38.* there saith our Saviour, *O Ierusalem Ierusalem, thou which killest the Prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not; Behold therefore your house is left unto you desolate.*

*Matth. 23. 37.*



Psal. 81. 13.

the fault was on their parts, the Lord wooed them, and strived with them, hee would have gathered them as a henne doth her chickings, but they would not, and this caused the jarre betweene the Lord and them, and therefore their house was left unto them desolate. So Psal. 81. 13. there saith the text; *Oh that my people Israel had hearkned unto me, and had walked in my wayes, I should soone have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries: but my people would not hearken unto my voyce, and Israel would none of me, so I gave them up unto their owne hearts lust, and they walked in their owne counsels. Israel would none of me, there was the breach.* So that, that which breaketh the match betweene God and us, is, because wee will not receive mercy, and grace, and salvation, offered unto us, that so our finnes may bee pardoned, and our persons accepted for our everlasting comfort and salvation. Looke as it is with a woman to whom a man maketh love, and would marry her, if she speake him faire, and use great complements, and bid him wellcome, and all this while resolve that shee will not bee married unto him, all her other outward behaviour the man regardeth not, but counteth it as nothing, because her heart is not with him, (and as the phrase is) if she do not grant him her good will, all is worth nothing. In this case just so it is here, all other outward complements and performances, God taketh them as matters of no consequence or worth, if this beleeving in Christ, and willing of grace bee wanting. If a

man shall come and heare the word of God speaking unto him, and shall receive Christ into his family, & pray unto him, and make a great profession of him, all this I must confesse is very good; but if the soule doe not will Christ, if the heart doth not prize Christ, and choose him, and close with him, and fasten unto him, it is worth nothing. If men will professe faire to Christ, and say, he is welcome, and all this while doe not give Christ their soules and good wils, the Lord Iesus doth take himselfe as despised, and counts himselfe as rejected in this kinde, and therefore we shall observe that God regards not any of our performances, if they bee not done from the heart. *2 Chron. 25. 2.* there saith the text of *Amaziah*, He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart, and therefore what is this to the marriage in the meane time: so that to gather up all, if it be so, that this hearty willing is that which God requirith of us, if it bee that whereby wee are able to close with Christ, if the want of this breaketh the match betweene God and the soule, then the case is cleare, that whosoever hath this will, shall have Christ and salvation by him: but this willing of Christ doth fully satisfie and content God; it doth enable us to fasten and lay hold upon Christ; the want of this doth breake the match betweene Christ and the soule, and therefore he that hath this will, shall surely have Christ, and salvation by him. This contents God, by this we lay hold upon God; and the want of this causeth the breach betweene God

*2 Chron. 25. 2.*



and us, and therefore hee that hath this shall have Christ.

The use of the point is threefold, it is a ground, first of instruction, here we may see and wonder at the riches of Gods bounty and goodnesse in his reasonable dealing with poore sinners, in that God doth not exact every thing at the utmost of us, he doth not require every thing in the utmost rigour, he doth not take poore sinners by the throat (as he did his fellow-servant) saying, *Pay me that thou owest mee*; there is no poore sinner, but he may send the Devill after him to dragge him into hell, he may justly say unto every sinfull soule, I gave thee perfect righteousness and holinesse and abilitie to performe obedience to all my commandements, either give mee that I expected from thee, and thou owest unto me, or else to hell thou must goe, where is my service and my obedience and my righteousness that I required of thee; God may say thus to every poore sinner, but hee doth not deale thus in justice with us, but blessed be his name, he doth not expect that wee should have all sufficiencie in our selves; he doth not say, That he that hath no sinne shall bee saved; let him take Christ, he that is able to performe obedience to all my Commandements, and doe whatsoever I require, he shall have Christ and salvation by him; he doth not deale with us after this manner, for then woe were it with us, it is not exact obedience that Christ requireth of us, but the condition is this, If any poore soule will take mercy offered

and receive grace tendered unto him, he shall have mercy, hee shall receive grace; as if God should say, Thou art a poore sinfull creature, many weaknesse are with thee, many imperfections trouble thee, many corruptions doe oppresse thee, I require no exaction of thee, if thou wilt take Christ and mercy, then Christ is thine, and mercy is thine; is not this marvelous mercy, is not this wonderfull goodnesse. If there should bee a poore miserable wretched creature, one that had neither portion nor ability in any measure, nor any thing that could procure a husband, no friends to succour her, no parents to relieve her, but were fatherlesse and motherlesse, and voyd of all comfort; if yet notwithstanding all this, a man of place and abilitie should come and offer love unto her, though shee have nothing, but is troubled with all weaknesse and infirmities, and full of all deformities, if this man now for all this should regard none of these things, if hee should looke for nothing, nor require any thing of her, but her goodwill and liking, if shee would have him then, hee would bee married unto her; you will say this is wonderfull love, and that nothing but love prevailed with him; surely hee could see nothing in her but that which might rather make him despise her, then shew any love unto her, but it was the violence of affection which caused him to marry her: This is our condition perfectly, nay wee are not able to expresse our miserable and woefull estate this way, because



because our baseness and vileness and misery is greater in respect of our sinnes than any poore wretch can be in regard of any outward respect, and the excellency of God also is greater, and farre exceedeth the dignity and excellency of any man in the world, and yet notwithstanding though we be nothing but ragges, full of corruptions and rottenness, and deformities, though we have neither beauty, nor portion, nor friends, nor means, but are fatherlesse and motherlesse, and laden with abundance of all abominations, yet for all this, this is all that God requireth of us, though we have nothing, and can doe nothing, yet if wee will but have Christ, if we will but receive grace and mercy offered, if we will but welcome and entertaine the Lord Iesus, this is all that God expects, the match then is made up, and the businesse is fully ended, we shall have Christ and abundance of love shewen unto us, and this should make foule burst out, and say is it possible? is it credible that if this my miserable heart would take Christ, he would direct me, if this my wretched damned soule would give entertainment to Christ he would receive me? Oh! what wonderful love, mercy and goodnesse is herein discovered, there can no better way be devised, how God may expresse more love, and shew greater mercy towards us, it is the Psalmists phrase, *open thy mouth unto me, and I will fill thee*, he doth not say, goe and provide for your selves, and feede your selves, no, no, the provision is made ready, and we need only open

open our mouthes wide, and God will fill them; marke here the wonderfull riches of Gods bounty, what greater care of provision can be expressed or expected than this, that a man should onely open his mouth, and that wide, and it should be filled, it is not spoken of the mouth naturally, but of the soule spiritually, doe but thou open thy soule, and empty thy heart of all other things whatsoever, doe but get a heart willing to welcome and give entertainment to the Lord Iesus Christ, and he will fill thee full of grace here, and glory for ever hereafter, this is the bounty of the Lord, it is the Lords mercy and goodnesse, and it should, it ought to be *mervailous in our eyes*, as the *Psalmist* speaketh in another case, we ought to admire the goodnesse of the Lord, in that he is pleased to offer us Christ and Salvation, upon so reasonable conditions: and this is the first use. *Ilw yob 2901*

Secondly, the second use is a word of terrour, it shewes in the second place, the just and heaveie condemnation of all such as perish, they are damned and goe to hell and everlasting destruction, because they will be damned, for if you would have had Christ and grace, you might have received Christ and Grace and Salvation by him. *Every man that will, let him take of the water of life, freely*, let him receive mercy and grace, and Salvation, and therefore if you have not grace, it is because you will not have it, and therefore if you perish thank your selves, for you would not be saved: there is never a soule this day in hell, but

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received the fruites of his owne labour, the reward of their owne workes, and the desire of their owne hearts, nay they have their owne will, if thou wilt not be recovered, and receive mercy offered, why then thou must be damned and perish forever. he that will not receive the Lord Iesus and entertaine grace so that he may goe to heaven, tis pittie but he should be damned into the lowermost pit of everlasting ruine and destruction; when men come to this passe once, that they are not willing to be the treasury of God, but are weary to heare the Word of God preached unto them one houre, and notwithstanding God hath revealed himselfe in his Word, and that with some glimpse, yet wicked men would not be under the power of it, because they would have their profits and pleasures, and enjoy their lusts and corruptions, they will not forsake their lusts, and abandon their abominations, and receive Christ and mercy; when the case stands thus with men, it is just with God to plunge them into everlasting misery, in the 8 of Prov. 36. there saith the text *He that flieth against me wrongeth his owne soule, all they that hate me love death, they that hate me saith the text, that is, they that hate wisdom love death, by wisdom there is meant the Lord Iesus, revealing the wisdom of the Father in the Word, now he that hateth this Word of God, he that will not be informed by this Word, he that will not be directed by it, he that will not be humbled by it, his soule taketh up armes against Gods ordinance.*

Prov. 8.36.

ordinances, why he loves death both naturally and eternally; when the wrath of God ceaseth up on him, he hath that which he loveth, you loved this, you loved death, you have it, you loved damnation, you doe enjoy it, and it is merveilous just with God, thus to deale with you, you cannot blame God for this but your selves, wicked men are desirous to be rid of God, and freed from the Counsell of God, that may chalke them out the way to Salvation, and they desire nothing; the knowledge of Gods lawes many wicked carnall man doth not desire, the good and Salvation of his owne soule, he doth not desire the preaching of the Word, for the reformation of his life, and the humbling of his soule, and directing of him in the wayes of Gods Commandements; they say to God, now depart from us, we care not for thy lawes, we will not walke after thy Commandements, if he at the last day say unto you, *Depart from me ye workers of iniquity I know you not*, then you shall have your desire, when the heavens shall melt away with fire, and the Sunne and the Moone shall be darkned, when all flesh shall appear before the judgement seate of God, at that day men and Angels shall heare the dreadfull doome which shall passe upon you by the Lord, you contemned my word and ordinances, and therefore *now from me ye are cast into everlasting destruction, prepared for the devill and his Angels*, you desired not to be informed, you would not be humbled, you refused to be directed



by my word when it was preached unto you, but you desired to fulfill your lusts, and enjoy your profits and your pleasures, you did not desire to be saved, and therefore now you shall have your desire, you shall be damned, and therefore depart from me, *I know you not*. You would have your pride when you were upon the earth, when you are in hell you may be as proud as you will, you would have your malice, when you are in hell you may have your desire, you may have your fill of maliciousnesse, in hell you may have elbow room enough to satiate your selves in your lusts and full abominations, when the soule of a man doth secretly desire that the Word may not worke upon him, then it is just with God to grant that desire of his soule, it were just with God that the Word should never worke more, that the Spirit should never strive more, that mercy and Salvation should never be offered any more, that man shall then have what he desired, and he may blame himselfe for whatsoever judgement falls upon him, in the 2 of *Theff.* 2, 12, there saith the text, *that they all might be damned which beleaved not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousnesse*, marke that hee speakes before of those that would not entertaine the truth, and the love of it, but when God made knowne his will and the way of Salvation, they did not love that nicenesse, they cared not for that exactnesse and holinesse, why what doe you love then saith God? upon what is your love placed? upon what is the desire of your soule fixed? oh saith

2 Theff. 2, 12.

saith the text, *They take pleasure in wickednesse*, in contemning, opposing, hindring, and despising the good Word of God, and therefore they shall be damned: when a man is not able to abide an admonition, when he cannot endure to be informed or counselled, exhorted or reprov'd; when the ministers nor the Word of God can have any power over men, when these poore creatures shall come into hell, then they shall have elbow roome to fulfill their lusts and corruptions wherein they so much delighted, they tooke pleasure in wickednesse, they would not, they could not abide the meanes of grace and salvation; you would have no reproofes, you would endure no admonitions, it was well with you, when you had no ministers to checke and reprove you, but alas poore soule, when you are gone downe into the bottomelesse pit of everlasting perdition, then you may have your full swing, then you shall never be reprov'd more, then you shall never be counselled more, you shall never be admonished more, you shall then never be prayed for any more, but be damned in hell for ever, from everlasting to everlasting; you shall then have your full pleasure in your sinnes, is it not just with God, that you who would live in wickednesse and prophanenesse, and would not receive grace and mercy when it was offerd, that God should give you up to the hardnes of your owne hearts, and blindnesse of your owne minds, & send you into everlasting condemnation for ever? First look as it is with a malefactor that is



convicted of high treason for plotting some wicked practise against his Prince, or for proceeding into rebellion for the overthrow of his Countrey, after all the sinnefull passages of his be discovered and made knowne, both to himselfe and the world, if the King after this maketh a Proclamation, that if hee will leave of his wicked enterprizes hee shall be pardoned, nay if the King shall send message after message unto him, secretly to tell him, that if he now will lay downe armes, and take his pardon, he shall freely be remitted and graciously received into favour, if this Traytor shall rather fling away his pardon then his weapons, I appeale to your owne consciences in this case, if the King should raise an army and overcome him, and take him and execute him without any pity or mercy, is he not justly rewarded, what will the world say, they will say, execution and death is too good for him, for he had a faire offer of pardon, if hee had had a heart to receive it, hee had pardon proclaimed unto him, nay the King sent messenger after messenger, to tell him, that if he would stoop to him, he should receive mercy and favour from him, and therefore seeing he refused and neglected so kinde an offer, he is executed justly, it is pity but condemnation should befall him, because hee would not take the meanes of consolation, this is the condition of every poore soule under Heaven, truly we are all Rebels and Traytors against Heaven, by our oathes and blasphemies we set our mouth against Heaven, we have often taken

up armes against God, and yet after all our pride and stubbornesse, and loosenesse, and prophane-  
nesse, and contempt of Gods Word and Ordi-  
nances, and yet the Lord is pleased to proclame  
mercy still, to every one that will receive it, all  
you that have dishonoured my name, all you that  
have profaned my Sabbaths, and contemned my  
Ordinances, all you cursed wretches come, come  
who that will, and take pardon, let them lay aside  
all their weapons, and receive it and salvation by  
him when it is offered to them, and they shall have  
their finnes forgiven, and they shall be received  
to mercy, now if any soule will stand out against  
God and say, I will not have Christ and Salvation,  
but will shift for my selfe, and try it out to the last,  
I will walke in my owne wayes, and take up my  
owne courses, I will be proud still, I will breake  
Gods Sabbaths still, and I will be malicious still,  
and breake Gods Commandements still, if any  
man shall be thus disposed, if then the great God  
of Heaven and Earth shall come, with tenne thou-  
sand thousand of judgements, and execute them  
upon that man, if he shall bring a whole legion of  
devils, and say, Take him devils, and torment him  
devils in hell forever, because he would not have  
mercy when it was offered, he shall not have mer-  
cy, because he would not have Salvation when it  
was tendered unto him, therefore let him have  
everlasting condemnation, if God should thus deale  
with that man, the Lord should be just in so doing,  
and he justly miserable. And this is the second  
use.



use, it is an use of terror to all those that will not receive Christ, and grace, and salvation by him.

Thirdly, in the third place it is a word of exhortation, it should set an edge upon your desires, and provoke your soules to give no sleepe to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, to give no quiet to your soules, nor contentment to your hearts, untill you have brought your soules to be willing to receive Christ Iesus, you are the Spouse of Iesus Christ, it is good for you therefore to consider, and thinke of your estate in this kind, if you will but have Christ, that is all he careth for, if he can but get your good wils, he looks for no more, and therefore you are to consider of it, and lie at your hearts daily, you should daily be perswading of your soules, and never cease till you have brought your hearts in some measure, to be willing to receive the Lord Iesus, and bid him welcome, and give entertainement unto him, and the more to prevaile with you in this case, consider of the reasonablenesse of the condition, and this may be a motive to provoke your soules hereunto, because the offer is marvellous easie, as faire as can be, the termes of agreement are as faire as any heart can desire, nay there is very good consideration in the goodnesse which the Lord hath tendred to us, and that is thus much, If we will but receive Christ Iesus, all that he hath shall be ours, the treasures of wisdom, and grace, and salvation, they shall be all ours, if we will but entertaine the Lord Iesus, let us therefore reason with our owne soules, and commune

man, with our owne spirits concerning this grati-  
ous offer of saluation; the soule should say, What,  
hath the Lord offered saluation at so easie a rate,  
will hee notwithstanding what ever I have beene  
heretofore, full of corruptions and abominati-  
ons, though my soule stands guilty of my finnes  
and distempers, though I be possessed with many  
weakeneses and infirmities, yet notwithstanding  
all this, will the Lord be pleased to pardon all, to  
supply all, to passe by all, onely upon this condi-  
on, if I will welcome and entertaine him; may I  
have Christ for taking of him, may I receive grace  
for carrying it away; why, good Lord if I will  
not doe this for Christ and grace I will do nothing;  
doth God require no more, why, then if grace and  
mercy and saluation be not worth this, they are  
worth nothing, if I will not doe this, I will doe no-  
thing for eternall life; this is that God expects, all  
that he lookes for; Every man that will, let him  
take grace and mercy, and that freely. In the 5 of  
King. 5. 13. the text saith of Naaman the Syrian, 2 King. 5. 13  
which he came to Elisha the man of God to bee  
healed, the Prophet sent a messenger unto him, say-  
ing, Goe and wash seven times in Jordan, and thy flesh  
shall come againe to thee, and thou shalt be cleane.  
Now hee being a man of authority and of some  
place, he tooke this somewhat in disdain, that hee  
should send a messenger out unto him, and bid him  
wash seven times in Jordan, hee was wrath and went  
away and sayd, Behold, I thought hee would surely  
come out some, and stand and call upon the name of the  
Lord



2 King. 5. 13.

Lord his God, and strooke his hand over the place and remooove the Leper; hee did thinke the Prophet would have done some great matter unto him, and therefore when hee saw that he bid him goe wash seaven times in *Jordan*, he went away in a kind of indignation; but then his servants they came neare to him in the 13. verse, and said, *My father if the Prophet had bid thee, &c.* As who should say if you will not doe so small a matter to be cured, you will doe nothing. So I say to every soule here present, if the Lord had required a great matter of us whereby we might attaine salvation; if hee had required a thousand Rams & 10. thousand rivers of Oyle; if he had required the first borne of our body for the sinne of our soules, if the Lord had enjoyned every soule of us to live howling & crying all the dayes of our life for mercy; if hee had commanded us to goe into a Chamber secretly, and there to fall upon our knees and pray unto him continually for mercy untill our eyes had failed with looking up to heaven for mercy, untill our hands had beene wearied with holding them up to heaven, untill our tongues had beene hoarse with crying for mercy, and untill our hearts failed us and fainted within us; if at the very last gaspe wee should be crying for mercy and did but then receive one drop of it, it would quit cost, it would be worth our labour; if the Lord had required all things whatsoever of you for one drop of mercy; if you had had your eyes about you, you would have given them, but what a wonder-  
full

full goodnesse is this, that the Lord should require nothing at our hands for Christ and grace and salvation, but a will to receive them; let me presse this a little further; if God had required a great thing of you, would you not have done it to have beene saved? how much more, when it cometh to this once, that it is at a lower rate then wee can desire or expect it should bee, onely be willing to take mercy and you shall have it, doe but carry away grace and it is your owne for ever. I cannot conceive of any easier tearme, whereby God might better expresse his wonderfull goodnesse towards us, wilt thou receive Christ and salvation by him? why then thou mayst have him, nay the Lord even forceth his commodities and his favour upon us, he doth not onely offer us this, but he forces it upon us in this kind, he is not onely willing that we should receive Christ if wee be but willing to take him, but the Lord himselfe doth beseech us that wee will be reconciled unto him, and receive mercy from him, and be blessed for ever. Take notice of this unmatched and unconceivable mercy of the Lord, in that he offereth Christ and the means of salvation upon so easie conditions, and at so low a rate; if wee can but will Christ wee shall have Christ and salvation by him, nay we shall not onely receive Christ if we will entertaine him, but the Lord himselfe doth beseech us to take mercy at his hands; aske your owne soules therefore if it bee not equall that you should entertaine the offer of Christ thus pronounced unto you.

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But besides as a further motive hereunto consider, that as the termes are equall and easie, so the commodity also in the second place is worth the price, and this may also inforce our hearts to forsake all for the getting of, the possession of this goodnesse which wee stand so in neede of, if the commodity were not good, though the condition were easie, and the price reasonable, it were then indeed something, wee could thinke to mend our selves in another place; but here as the termes are most easie, so the good is farre better than can bee conceived, you cannot mend yourselves goe whither you will, use what means you will. If you will have Christ, what then, will you have as men use to say, when a man hath a commodity offered him a good penny worth, and hee knowes not a good bargaine when he hath it, marke what Chapmen will say; Oh say they, you will goe further and speed worse, just so it is here, it is the woofullst thing under heaven for men not to know when they have a good bargaine, and when they are well dealt withall. To refuse mercy and salvation when it is offered them, and that upon so easie termes, and at so low a rate; for what will you have if you will not have Christ, if you will not have grace and salvation, why, what will you have, upon what will you bestow your hearts? you will have your finnes and corruptions, and not grace and mercy, you will have damnation, and not salvation; you will have hell, you will not have heaven, you will be like the Jewes, who refused Christ, and chose

*Barrabasa* murtherer, for whensoever a soule refuseth the Lord Iesus, it is certaine that he chooseth a *Barrabas*: if you refuse the one, you must needes receive the other, and then consider which is best, you will not have Christ and salvation, what will you then have, hell, damnation, confusion, and destruction; you will not bee happy, and therefore you must bee miserable; and therefore this is observable, the Lord hath sent from heaven this day, and offered salvation and happinesse to men, as freely as ever any man had any thing offered; I come this day from the Lord to enquire how the case standeth, and how the match goeth forward betweene Christ and you: Let me therefore goe to your soules, and answer you mee unto my question; the offer of grace you see is free, the condition is easie, the price is reasonable, whither now will you have mercy and salvation, or no? you little ones, you young ones, that have beten married to profits and pleasures, to lusts and corruptions, the Lord Iesus is become a great suitor to you all this day, and I am Christs spokesman to speake a good word for him; be not, oh be not squeamish and coy, and say afterward you will speake with him, and tell him how your minde stands: deferre not the time, but welcome him, and give entertainment unto him: now presently, do not put him off with delayes, but presently embrace his kinde offer, and be married unto him, for if you will not now take him, he will come in a flaming fire hereafter, to take vengeance of you all that now refuse



and reject him, and therefore I beseech you let me get your good will for this, every man that will, let him take grace and salvation freely, tell mee then, will you have mercy and salvation? oh take heed of refusing it, for if you do the time will come when you shall never have it, though you never so earnestly desire it, if you obtaine it you are made for ever, if you enjoy it not, you are for ever damned; returne therefore I beseech you a comfortable answer to the demand which the Lord maketh, if you will receive grace and Christ and Salvation from him, then speake to the Lord in this case, let your soules answer him cheerefully, we will Lord, the Lord saith, come unto me ye sinfull sonnes of men, and I will heale your rebellions, answer the Lord and say, we come Lord, for thou art our God, thinke upon this, and worke your soules hereunto, graunt Christ your good wills in this kind, if you will but prize him and choose him above all things in this world, if you be resolved to cleave onely to him, and forsake all other things in the world for him; if your soules be but willing to receive Christ, I proclaime mercy and salvation unto you, we are as I told you before, Christs messengers, sent to speake a good word for Christ, and to get your good wills for him: oh that we may have our errant from you, shall I say to the Lord Iesus, all the poore soules that have heard the Word this day, and received the tender of Salvation this day, I have all their hands, they have all writ downe their names, that they

they will have Christ, and they will have salvation offered unto them, is it thus with you, if it be so, then I may goe and returne a chearefull answer to Christ; but doe not, doe not I beseech you give me the deniall, doe not say I cannot live by grace, I must provide for family, for wife and children, can you not so, why? I must not take this answer from you, let not Gods messengers go drooping to heaven, and returne this uncomfortable answer to the Lord, in this case let us not say we offered mercy, no body would receive it, we tendered salvation, but no body regarded it; shall we returne this answer, no no, we must have another answer from you, and therefore I beseech you worke yet more upon your soules, and turne unto us a chearefull answer in this case; for God looketh for a comfortable answer, he wooeth from heaven, and therefore never give her the deniall. In the 5<sup>th</sup> of Deut. 29. *Oh that there were such a heart in my people to fear me and keepe my Commandements, that it may goe well with them, and with their children after them,* thus hee writeth, thus wee speake, now what answer shall wee have from you? that you will not have Christ, and you will not have grace and salvation! Oh take heede of this, wee come for your hearts, and wee must have your hearts, therefore shut up your doores against all other lovers, and come and say cheerefully, wee will Lord, wee will cleave to thee onely; goe home therefore, and whatsoever you now resolve this way, persevere in it, and take heed that no man inveigle you and withdraw your love from the Lord Iesus; and

Deut. 5. 29.



and when you come at home, reason with your  
owne soules, and say, Lord I have followed vani-  
ties heretofore, I have had profits and pleasures to  
looke after, but now I care for nothing but for the  
Lord Iesus, if I may but have him, I care for no-  
thing else; I care not whether I ever see good day  
again or no: and therefore if pleasures call, if pro-  
fits entise, if lusts and corruptions stirre, then I will  
answer, I am married to Christ, I will have Christ,  
and I will have salvation, nothing shall make mee  
forsake him; thus cleave fast unto Christ forever,  
let every soule resolve that hath heard mee this  
day, that they will have Christ, and let them take  
heede that they never staire backe from him, and  
say to your soules before so many witneses in the  
Congregation, the Lord called and asked whether  
I would have him? and I answered, I was willing,  
and what shall I now breake off my resolution?  
no, never doe it for shame; for if you doe forsake  
Christ, and do not keepe close to your resolution,  
at the last day, when the Angels of God, & a whole  
Congregation shall come and witnesse against you,  
what a miserable estate will you then bee in, there-  
fore resolve to hold fast to Christ, and keepe this  
resolution unto the end.



I COR. 2. 14.

*The naturall man receiveth not the thing of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishnesse unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*



**V**E have propounded heretofore five generall circumstances of preparation. First a man must know that the offer of grace is free. Secondly that a man must will Christ and grace before hee shall have Christ & grace. Thirdly, he that doth will Christ, shall have Christ and salvation by him; all which we have already handled out of that place *Revel. 22. 17. Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely.* And now wee are come to the fourth circumstance, which is that no man by nature can will Christ and Grace; and for this purpose I have chosen this Text. And a little to make way for our selves, if you take your eyes back to the be-

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beginning of the Chapter, about the 3, 4, and 5. Verses, you may see how the holy Apostle doth expresse his earnest desire to preach nothing, nor know any thing but Christ Iesus, and him crucified, and therefore hee lookes not after the excellencie of humane eloquence, or wisdom of men, though hee could have had this too; and happily expressed this also, yet hee proclaimes it in the eares of the *Corinthian* Doctours, that hee desired nothing in that Vniversity (for *Corinth* was a famous Vniversity as *Cambridge* and *Oxford* is) but to know the Lord Iesus and him crucified, and therefore his speech and preaching was not with enticing words of mans wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power the *Corinthian* Doctours bragged of, that humane wisdom and learning wherewith they were endued, but hee tolls them he desired not this, nor never looked after it. Now least some might cavill at the Apostles neglecting of this elegance, whereby hee might sugar over his doctrine that was to be delivered by him to the people, least by the notwithstanding of this, he might bring a neglect upon himselfe and upon his doctrine; the Apostle therefore to remoove these silly objections and secret cavills, discovers unto us from the first Verse to the end of the Chapter, the excellency of the Gospell of the Lord, delivered in the plainenesse of it in the sixt Verse; there saith he, howbeit we speake wisdom among them that bee perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the Princes of this

this world that come to nought, but wee speake the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, as if he had said, though you thinke (O yee *Corinthians*) that there is no learning but humane learning, yet you must know that wee speake wisdom too, and that to those that are the perfectest men in their owne understanding. I tell you, wee speake wisdom which the world and the princes thereof, those that have the greatest parts never knew, never obtained; you *Corinthian* Doctors bragge much of your learning and knowledge, but you have received it of other humane authors, but wee teach unto you the wisdom of God and of the Gospell, which eye hath not seene nor eare heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive, for God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit, where wee may observe by the way, that hee which teacheth the Gospell in the plainenesse of it, teacheth the deepest things that can be conceived; for here *S. Paul* speaketh of things which the wise of the world never heard of, never conceived. But then they might reply further, how can you know these things, and why may not others know them as well as you? These are the two objections that might bee made against that which the Apostle had before spoken of. How came you to know them, and why may not others know them as well as you? The Apostle answereth these two questions. And he answereth the first, how he came to know them,



from the 10. Verse to the 14. God saith he, *hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deepe things of God*; now wee have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that wee might know the things that are freely given to us of God, as if he had sayd, The spirit of God knoweth these things, and teacheth a poore soule these things as farre as is convenient for him; the Spirit of God understandeth these things, and makes knowne these things to his servants; they know not these things of themselves but by the power of Gods Spirit, the Spirit of God assisting and working effectually in them, teacheth them these secrets. But then why doe not wicked men come to understand these great matters also? To this the Apostle answers in the Text, *The naturall man receiveth not the things of the Spirit; for they are foolishnesse unto him, &c.* they doe not know them because they cannot. A naturall man doth not know these things, they are wonders and miracles unto him, tell him how a poore soule comes to be humbled and broken, and have his sinnes pardoned, and bee received to mercy, why these things are wonders to a carnall man, the Text saith, *he doth not understand these things*, because hee cannot, and the ground of this is, because they have not the spirit to teach them; & this I take to be the scope of the Apostle in the Text; and in the verse we are to observe onely one point meete for our purpose, for as we have sayd before, there

there are five generall circumstances of preparation observable; three we have handled, and the fourth is this, No man of himselfe by nature can will to receive Christ; and this is here plainly set open in the text, and therein manifestly expressed, it is the maine scope of the holy Ghost in the words, a naturall man receiveth not, nay he cannot receive the things of God; but before wee can come to gather the point, two things must be discovered unto us. First what is meant by a naturall man. Secondly what is meant by the things of the spirit of God. First, what is meant by a naturall man, the *Corinthians* might have replied upon the Apostle, what are you a man of the spirit onely, what meane you by a naturall man? I answered, he is a naturall man, in phrase of Scripture, which hath not the worke of grace soundly wrought in him, which hath not the spirit of God; whosoever he be that lyeth in the bosome of the Church, whosoever he be that hath a name to live and yet is dead, all carnall Gospellers and hyppocrites, those that are coloured over with the name of Christians and religion, whosoever they be that have not that saving worke of grace, and the new frame of grace set up and reared in their soules, by the assistance of Gods Spirit, all these how ever they may be coloured over, if they have not had the sanctifying worke of Gods Spirit upon them, all these are sayd according to the Phrase of the Apostle, to be naturall men, and voyd of the spirit, as may appeare by the words going be-



fore the Text, and following after. First compare them with the words going before in the 10. and 12. Verses, *Wee have received the Spirit of God*, saith the Text; the naturall man and the spirituall are opposed one to another. Wee saith the Apostle have received the Spirit, so that hee that hath Gods Spirit is a spirituall man, and therefore hee that hath not the Spirit of God in him, hee that hath not the will of God revealed unto him by the Spirit he is a naturall man. Looke also in the words after the Text, Vers. 15. *He that is spirituall discerneth all things*, he that hath a heart truly humbled, and a soule truly sanctified; he that is adopted, he is a spirituall man, so that he which is voyd of the Spirit, he is a naturall man; the phrase is excellent in this kind, *Jude 19.* these bee they saith the Text, that separate themselves, sensuall, not having the Spirit; the words there interpret one another, hee was speaking before of wicked wretches, and those that lived after their owne ungodly lusts; in the 18. Verse saith the Text, *there shall be mockers in the last time who shall walke after their owne ungodly lusts*; where we may note, that we shall never see a mocker, one that opposeth Christ and the Gospell, and is jeering at the Saints of God, but he walkes after ungodly lusts. They are sensuall men, who be those sensuall men? those that have not the Spirit of God, as wee may see Verse 19. and therefore whosoever he be or whatsoever hee be, be his appearance never so good, if hee be not truly sanctified by the spirit of God, though  
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Jude 19.

he be a new man outwardly, if hee be not found in his conversation, hee is a naturall man; hee that hath not the Spirit of God ruling and domineering over his lusts, he is in a naturall estate.

The second thing which is to bee discovered is this, *vid.* what is meant by the things of the Spirit of God, and then the point will fall faire and undeniable. To this I answer, there are some things of God that are revealed in the creation of the world, *Rom. 1. 20.* there saith the text, *The invisible things of him (meaning God) from the creation of the world are cleerely seene, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternall power and Godhead;* that is, a man that looketh into the frame and fabricke of the world, and seeth the making of the earth, and the Sea, and all things therein, hee cannot say, but God hath beene here, an infinite wisdom, and an Almighty power hath beene here, and framed all these things, but these are not the things of God, which are meant in the text, but there are other things of God which we must looke after, and they cannot be discerned by the creation of the world, and therefore, *1 Cor. 1. 21.* *1 Cor. 1. 21.* we shall observe this, *After that in the Wisdom of God, saith the text, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishnesse of Preaching, to save them that beleeve, marke the naturall men might have knowne though they would not, that there was a God, by the wisdom of God, that is by the wisdom of God in creating of the World and by the observation of things in the same, but they*



they could not take notice of him as a God reconciled, as a God that should appoint Christ as a redeemer, and as a God that should send Christ to bee a redeemer, these are the things which men could not know by the creation of the world and by the wisdom thereof; the things of grace and of our redemption, the favour and love that God beares towards his in Christ, these are the things of God, the things of election, sanctification, justification and glorification; these are the things of God which are meant especially in the Text, as if he had sayd, God by the spirit can onely reveale these things, these come immediately from God by the meanes hee hath appointed; a man may know that God hath created heaven and earth, and that he hath made all, and provided for all, and yet goe to hell. But hee that hath found Gods love in Christ, God working graciously upon his soule, God humbling his heart and pulling downe his soule that hee might bee fit to receive mercy, and then bestowing mercy upon him; when a soule seeth these things, then these are the things of God here meant; Gods spirit must onely work these, the spirit onely must reveale these, and by the operation of the spirit wee are made partakers of these, these are the things of God which are to be understood in the Text; God is said to call and to sanctifie, it is the Spirit that converts, and adopts, and humbles mens soules, as who should say, These are the workes of the Spirit, there is no seeing, there is no perceiving of these, there is no way to be

be made partakers of these without the Spirit, so that the doctrine now lieth open, and that is this; No man naturally is able of his owne power to receive the spirituall things of grace and salvation, no naturall man, that is, he that hath not the Spirit of God working in him, no man that is in his naturall estate can receive the spirituall things of grace and salvation. Hee doth not receive them, nay he cannot receive them saith the Text, to put out all doubts, and to cast away all cavills; the Text doth not onely say he doth not receive them, but that he cannot receive them, doe hee what he will, doe he what he can, come to a naturall man, and aske him will you receive Christ and the worke of grace? why yes with all his heart, and he makes no doubt but he doth so, and hee hopes hee shall finde the comfort of it. The Text saith, God saith, the truth saith, you doe not, nay you cannot, you say you doe, whom shall wee beleve in this case, God or you; I can prove you are a naturall man, you live in base wicked courses, the Spirit of God is an holy Spirit; you live in ungodly and unlawfull courses, the Spirit of God is a wise Spirit, you are ignorant and know not the things belonging to salvation, and therefore the world knowes, and you know that you are a naturall man, and the spirit, that saith a naturall man cannot receive the things of God, and yet you say you can, whom therefore shall we beleve? so that the point is plaine, that a man by nature hath not power to will to receive Christ and grace and



salvation by him, and we will make good the point in foure particulars, by way of explication, That a man hath not power to will to receive grace and salvation by Christ; First to omit that which the Papists themselves confesse in this case, namely that a naturall man of himselfe cannot finde out the meanes of life and Salvation, but God must give him some preventing grace, he must be enlightened, that is, God must reveale and make knowne the things that concerne his peace unto him out of the Word; hee must discover those things unto him, which appertaine to his peace and justification by Christ. I will omit this, and speake onely of the power which a naturall man hath to entertaine the things belonging to life and Salvation; and suppose it be granted that the things of Salvation must be made knowne unto a naturall man in this case, or else he can never of himselfe finde them out, yet when these things be set open to mens eares by the ministers of God, when grace and Salvation are offered unto men, yet make when these are proclaimed, a naturall man cannot entertaine these things, but the heart of a naturall man will runne away from these things, which we may plainly see, if wee looke but into the 19 of *Mat. 22*. there was a young man made some good profession, he came unto Christ, and asked him, *Master, what good thing shall I doe to inherit eternall life?* Christ sayd unto him, *If thou wilt enter into life, keepe the Commandements,* the young man asked Christ, - which Commandement he should keepe,

*Mat. 19. 22.*

keepe, our Saviour answers him, *Thou shalt not kill: Thou shalt not commit adultery, &c.* The young man answers, *All these things have I observed from my youth, what lacke I yet;* Then Christ saith unto him, *if thou wilt be perfect, goe sell all that thou hast and give it to the poore, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,* but the text saith, *Verf. 23. When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowfull, for he had great possessions:* All the while before our Saviour had not touched him to the quicke, but when he saith unto him, *Goe thy wayes sell all that thou hast and follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,* he then went away, why, marke here, Christ made him a brave offer, hee told him he should inherit heaven and happinesse if he would but doe this, but saith the text, *he went away sorrowfull,* the text doth not say that he would dispute of it, and consider of it, but presently as soone as he heard it, he had a secret kind of distaste against it, and went away and with drew himselfe from the offer of life & salvation. The phrase is pretty to observe in the 5 of *Iohn 40.* there our Saviour Christ was disputing with the Scribes and Pharisees, and shewing unto them the meanes of Salvation, but marke what our Saviour saith of them, *It will not come to me that ye might have life,* marke that phrase; for it is observable in the 39 verf. the verse going before, our Saviour had sayd unto them, *Search the Scriptures for in them ye thinke ye have eternall life, and they are they which testifie of me;* the offer was faire, if they would but have come to Christ, they might



might have had life, but marke what hee saith of them, of the Scribes and Pharisees, and so of all naturall men, they will not come, though merrey and salvation be offered and tendered.

But in the second place, when these things of life and salvation are set before a naturall man, and offered unto him, and he will not come to Christ, that he may have them; yet suppose Christ come to him, imagine the Lord Iesus comes home to the soule of a poore sinner, and knocketh & rappeth at the doore of his heart, continually striving with him by his blessed Spirit, and the use of meanes; although the Lord would winne him, and wooe him as hee did Ierusalem, *O Ierusalem, Ierusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a henne doth her chickens under her wings, and yee would not:* Locke as the henne cloocketh her chickens together that so shee may gather them under her wings, and thereby prevent them from some mischance that may befall them, so the Lord Iesus called after Ierusalem, and wept over it: *Oh that thou hadst known at least in this thy day the things belonging to thy peace,* and yet they would none of him; just so is the case of all naturall men, God calleth after them, and knocketh againe and againe, and yet notwithstanding they do not onely decline from the truth, but if the Spirit of God still strive with them, if they cannot goe away from Christ, but Christ followes them home to their houses as it were, then they fall out with Christ, and professe they will none of Christ and salvation, they resist and oppose the Spirit

rit of God, they take up arms against the Spirit in this kinde. *Act. 7. 51.* there saith the text, *Ye stiffe-necked and uncircumcised in heart and eares, ye doe alwayes resist the holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so doe yee: which of the Prophets have not your fathers persecuted, &c.* as who should say, the Lord sent his Spirit in the ministry of the Prophets (for so you must conceive of Gods Ministers, though they bee poore soules, yet Gods Spirit labours through them, and when they strive with the soules of men, and labour to plucke them out of their sinnes, then Gods Spirit strives.) God sent his Spirit among these men here, & yet they resisted it. And so, *Act. 13. 46.* there saith the text of Paul and Barnabas, *that they waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting life, loe we turne to the Gentiles.* The text doth not say, because yee have gone away from the word, But because you have put it away from you: Thus the soule of a naturall man doth put away the word of God, and opposeth salvation. In this kinde, in the 22. *Matt. 5.* When the King there had prepared a great feast of fatter things, when he had killed his Oxen and his fatlings, and all things were ready, hee sent forth his harbengers about to call them that were hid-den to the feast, but they (saith the text) made light of it, and went their wayes, one to his furme, another to his merchandise, &c. Christ he send's his faithfull Ministers about to invite all people to receive life and salvation, Come yee that are hungry and thirstie and buy



*buy without money:* but the truth is, they in the Parable spoken of, would not come to the feast, so it is with all naturall men, though our Saviour followes them, and would perswade them to entertaine the meanes of saluation, yet they refuse it, and stand out against it; so that they doe not onely withdraw themselves from the truth, but oppose it when they are pursued.

Thirdly, a naturall man doth not onely withdraw himselfe from grace and saluation offered, and resist this grace pressed upon him, but if the Lord follow him yet further, and course him, and pursueth him that he may give him grace; yet considered in himselfe, hee is not capable of this grace. In the 6. of *Mat. 24.* there saith our Saviour, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* Every man naturally hath his Mammon, the proud man hath his Mammon, and the covetous man hath his Mammon, and the prophane man hath his Mammon, now these cannot serve God and Mammon, altho to serve them both, doth not imply onely a difficulty, but an impossibility also, so that we may plainly see, a naturall man is no capable of grace, but understand this wisely, I doe not say, that a man by nature is incapable of grace, thus farre, that he is not a fit subject to be wrought upon, and to be made capable, but this I say, that a man having sinne, and remaining in his sinnes, is not able to entertaine grace, things so considered for a while, as long as he continueth in that estate, he is not capable of grace, but yet God can make him fit, and disposed thereunto, he

may

*Mat. 6, 24.*

may be wrought thereunto, and God by his spirit can make him able to entertaine grace, but he must first be disposed therunto, looke as it is with a vessel that is full of puddle, there is an impossibility now in this vessell, as long as it is full of that pudly and filthy water, that it should receive cleane and pure water, but when it is emptied of that filthy water, then it is capable to receive pure water, but first the dirty water must be put out, before it can receive the pure. Iust so it is here, though the soule may be made a vessell fit to receive grace, yet now being full of abominations, full of covetousnesse, full of malice, full of pride, full of love of our selves, full of hypocrisie, full of carelesnesse, loosenesse, and prophaneesse, full of all manner of lusts, and corruptions, and concupiscence of the flesh, when the soule is brimmed full of these, it is impossible that it should receive grace, it is impossible that grace and corruption should lodge in the same bosome, so that God must first empty the soule of these lusts, and abominations, and prepare him for grace, before grace can be put into him, before he can receive grace from God, the fallow ground that hath a great many thistles, and is full of weedes, and nettles, and grasse, this ground we use to say is yettable ground, it may be plowed and made fit to receive seeds, and beare fruite, but it must first be plowed, for all the while this trash is in it, it is not fit for seed, though it may be made fit by tilling of it, so the soule of a sinner is arable, God can fit it, and prepare it to receive grace.



**Ioh. 5. 44.**

grace and eternall life, but he must be first plowed  
and made fit, he is overranne with all corruption,  
and therefore of himselfe, for a while before the  
Lord humble him and fit him, and prepare him  
to entertaine Christ, and receive grace, he cannot  
receive it. *Ioh. 5. 44.* There saith the Text, *He*

can you belaeve which receive honour one of another  
and seeke not the honor which cometh from God on-  
ly. As who should say, these things cannot stand

together, that a man should be full of sinne, and  
that time goe to the Spirit to haue his sinnes cru-  
cified, these thing cannot stand so, that there is  
a kinde of indisposition and impossibility, for the  
present, that a naturall man should receive grace.

Rom. 6 20.

**Rom. 6:20.** There saith the Text, *When you were servants to sinne, you were free from righteousness,* that is, when a mans corruptions rule over him, when a man yeelds himselfe to be under the power of his lusts, when sinne is a mans master, in so much that he must do every thing which that command him; if malice command him to hate, then he must obey malice; and hate, and envy his brother, when covetousnesse is a mans master, and if that bids him gripe, and cheate, and cozen, he must then doe it, if a man be thus a servant to sin, he is free from righteousness, he cannot be made partaker of grace and salvation so long as he remaines in this estate and condition.

Fourthly, the fourth passage is this, as the soule  
of a naturall man declines from grace offered and  
revealed, as it opposeth grace, pressed so in the  
fourth

fourth place it is not willing to be wrought upon, that it may be fit to receive grace, and be made capable of it; there is no naturall man under heaven that is willing to be wrought upon, that hee may be capable to receive grace, hee would not have grace and Christ, and though he might in the 19. of Luke the 14. and 27. verses, our Saviour Compares himselfe to a master that was to goe into a farre Country to receive a kingdome, and therefore gives over his estate into the hands of his servants, hee called his ten servants and gave them ten pounds, saying, *Occupie till I come.*

Luke 19. 14.

Now when hee is gone marke what the Text saith in the 14. Verse, *We will not have this man to rule over us; the Citizens hated him and sent a messenger after him saying, We will not have this man to rule over us.* Herein is implied two things, first that God would rule over the hearts, hee would informe their judgements, and fit their soules to receive grace, but marke what they say, *We will not have him to reigne over us,* wee will not have the Lord Iesus take possession of our hearts, and rule and guide them in the way of grace and salvation, and so say all naturall men when the truth of God is followed and pressed, and their consciences awakened and their minds enlightned, then they cry out, we will not be troubled and pestered with these matters; in the 8. of Rom. 7. there saith the Text *the carnall minde is enmitie against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeede can be.* A naturall man is not subject to God,

Rom. 8. 7.



he is not, may hee cannot be subject to the Law of God, the Text doth not say he doth not obey the Law of God, but hee is not subject to it; for it is one thing to obey the word and Spirit of God, and another thing to be subject unto it, as for example, suppose a master command his servant to doe something that is unjust and unlawfull, and if hee will not doe it, then beats him; the servant is then said to be subject to his master, hee may beare the blow and endure the stripes of his master, but if he be honest and will not doe the thing, hee cannot bee sayd to obey his master, so likewise if it please a Prince to deale harshly with his subject, and punish him unjustly, his subject may submit himselfe unto him, but he doth not obey him, but this is the madnesse of our sinfull natures that wee will not be subject to the Word of God, we will not beare the blow, nor indure the stroake of the Spirit, that so it may plucke us out of our corruptions, and frame us and fashion us in this case, and make us fit to receive grace; but when the word discovereth our sinnes unto us, and our misery in regard of the same, the soule begins to swell and take up an indignation against the truth revealed, it endeavours what it may, and labours what it can to acquit it selfe of the word and to cast out the same, wee professe that wee will not have our hearts informed and our mindes enlightned, wee will not be humbled and prepared to receive grace and salvation offered by the Lord Iesus. If it bee not thus, what meane those swellings and bubblings of

of heart against the word when it is preached, sometimes a mans conscience is opened and touched by the Word of God, and what follows? why presently hee professeth hee will never heare that Minister more, hee saith tis pittie hee should ever preach more, and tw'ere good hee were out of the Country, and that the kingdome were rid of him; alas, what doth the Minister this while, what doth he intend all this while that you take such distaste at him, why, you have a proud heart, hee would humble it, he would plucke you out of your corruptions that you may be prepared for grace, but your soules say, you will not be wrought upon and framed, that you may receive grace and salvation; however you doe not professe so much with your mouthes, yet your actions testifie as much, there is never a faithfull Minister of God but speakes home to the consciences of men, and tells them of their beloved sinnes and besome corruptions, and hee doth this to prepare way for the Lord Iesus. He knowes you must be fitted to receive grace and salvation, before you shall be made partakers of grace and salvation; he knowes that there are many mountaines to bee levelled, and crooked things to bee made straight, and many rough things to bee made smooth and plaine, and therefore hee intends nothing but to have your soules broken and prepared for Christ, but you say you will not bee humbled and framed, and made fit to see the things that belong to your peace here, and your salvation hereafter, and therefore



you cannot receive the things of God: so then to gather up all together, if it be so, that when the things of grace and salvation are revealed and offered, a naturall man doth turne away from them, if it bee so that though the Lord striveth with a naturall man, and labours by his Spirit to winne him and wooe him to receive grace, yet he resists the Spirit, and takes up armes against the offer of grace; if it bee so that when the Lord followes him with grace, yet a naturall man is not capable of grace, if it bee so that the heart of a naturall man is not subject to the Word of God, and would not be wrought upon that he may be made fit to receive grace, then it is cleare, that a naturall man cannot receive the things of God if hee goes away from grace offered and resists grace pressed; if hee be not capable of grace, and is unwilling to be made capable, then the point is evident, and the doctrine undeniable, namely that a man in his naturall estate cannot receive the things of grace and salvation; and this is a thing so cleare to a gracious heart, as nothing more; wee see then the prooffe of the point, a naturall man cannot receive the things of God, the reasons of the point why a naturall man cannot but doe thus, as he doth withdraw himselfe from grace offered, and resist and oppose the Word of God. The grounds of it are three, the first argument alledged is taken out of the words of the Text, and it stands thus, a naturall man cannot receive the things of God, why? because they are spirituallly discerned, what is that? the meaning

ning is this, hee that will receive spirituall things, must have some spirituall ability and power about him, some spirituall helpe vouchsafed unto him for the performance of this work; a man that will discern spirituall things must have a power answerable to that hee would discerne, a man must have spirituall helpe from heaven before hee can entertaine spirituall graces; for spirituall graces and the spirituall worke of the Lord are onely agreeable and fitting one for another, but now no naturall man hath any spirituall power, these two things are different in their kindes, namely nature and the Spirit, a naturall man hath nothing of the Spirit, no spirituall ability in him, but hee must have a spirituall ability that can discerne the things of the Spirit, and therefore a naturall man cannot discerne spirituall things; thus I reason, no naturall faculty can put forth a supernaturall worke, a thing that is barely within the compasse of nature cannot put forth an action above the nature of it, because every thing workes within its compasse; as the tree that growes, it cannot goe and walke as the beast doth; the beast that hath the sensuall facultie, that walkes, and sees, and heares and feeles, but it cannot reason; man hee hath the reasonable facultie, and he reasons and performes such actions as belong to him; now every one of these worke within their owne compasse, they have their severall kinds of operations; the tree growes, the beast feeles, and man reasons, and none of these can exceede their owne nature, or put forth a  
blow O 3 worke



worke above their nature, so that then wee see no naturall power can performe a supernaturall worke, but a naturall man as hee came into the world hath nothing but nature in him, and therefore he cannot discern the things of God, which is a supernaturall worke wrought by the Spirit of God, for so saith the Text, *they are spiritually discerned.*

1o Iohn 3. 6.

Gal. 5. 17.

The second argument is this, all naturall men are altogether fleshly, that is, wholly overpowered with sinne; marke that place in the third of Iohn and sixt, there saith the Text, *whatsoever is borne of the flesh is flesh, and that which is borne of the Spirit is spirit,* but now marke all the things of God, as first election, secondly conversion, thirdly sanctification, fourthly justification, fifthly glorification and the like, they are nothing else but spirituall, they are spirituall things, the grace of God is spirituall, and the Word of God is spirituall; now marke what followeth in the fift of Galathians the 17. there saith the Text, *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, & these now are contrary the one to the other,* that is, a naturall corrupt heart resists and is contrary to the worke of Gods Spirit, they lust one against another, and are contrary one to another; then marke how I reason from the former ground, if the soule of a naturall man be professely opposite and contrary to the Spirit of grace, then the soule of a naturall man will not of it selfe, nay it cannot receive and entertaine Christ and grace, they that oppose and would

would destroy one another, they will not entertaine one another; as for example, fire and water are contrary one to another, and therefore they will not meete together and entertaine one another, but continually seeke to destroy one another, so light and darkenesse they are contrary, and therefore will not receive one another but seeke the destruction one of another, as when light comes darkenesse is gone, and when darkenesse comes light that must be gone; but now marke, the heart of a naturall man is all flesh, and the things of God are all Spirit, and therefore these two are contrary, and therefore oppose and would destroy one another; the heart of a naturall man is contrary to God and grace, and therefore cannot receive and entertaine God and grace, but seeke to destroy them, and therefore it is observeable in the 8. of Rom. 7. *the wisdom of the flesh is enmity to the spirit of God, it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeede can be;* when the heart of a naturall man begins to feele the blow by the hand of Gods Spirit stirring and striving in him to humble him and make him fit for grace, it flyeth backe presently, and will by no means beare the blow of the Spirit, it will not give way to the worke of God. Now marke how I dispute, that which will not, nay that which cannot be subject to the Spirit of God, that will never receive grace which is the worke of the Spirit of God, but a naturall man whatsoever he hath, even his wisdom is not subject to the Spirit, hee will not beare, hee will not  
away



away with the worke of the ministry, and therefore hee cannot receive grace, and this is the second passage. If the nature of a naturall man be altogether flesh, and is contrary to grace, and will not be subject to the Spirit, then it cannot receive grace, but all naturall men are contrary to grace, they are altogether flesh and resist the spirit and therefore they cannot entertaine grace.

The third Argument is this, a dead man hath no power to procure life unto himselfe, but all men by nature are dead in trespasses and finnes, and therefore no naturall man is able to procure spirituall life unto himselfe; for the understanding of this argument, know thus much, that the nature of man since his fall is stripped of all that holinesse and righteousness whereby he might bee enabled to the performance of any spirituall worke, and not onely so, hee is not onely deprived of the image of God, but is altogether overspread with wickednesse and unrighteousnesse, which take the possession of every poore soule under heaven, *John 3. 6. Whatsoever is borne of the flesh is flesh*, now every man naturally is altogether flesh, the will of man and the heart of man is altogether fleshy; and therefore in the heart of man there is no good at all. And consider the reason of this, why the whole soule is thus defiled with sinne, wee must conceive that *Adam* was not onely a particular person, but he took the whole nature of mankind upon him; so that the nature of man in *Adam* while hee was in his innocencie might either bee carried to the

*John 3. 6.*

the obedience of the will of God, or else wholly against the will of God, and therefore by *Adams* fall man was altogether deprived of his righteousness, and caried against the will of God. Now to presse the Argument if it be so that all mens hearts are possessed with rebellions by nature, and turned away from God; then men naturally cannot turne unto God, but all men naturally are wholly possessed with sinne, and by rebellion, are turned from God, and therefore they cannot naturally turne unto God. Againe consider there must bee some spirituall power, some spirituall life put into a man before hee can performe any good, therefore a naturall man cannot doe any good, but is a dead man in respect of grace, because he hath lost that same soule of righteousness whereby he should performe that good which God requireth, and so that holinesse being gone, the soule of the will is gone, and the power to doe any good or receive any good is gone. So then the case is cleare and the point evident by force of argument and Scripture; that a naturall man hath no power to receive the Lord Iesus, and grace, and salvation from him.

If this be true as hath beene proved by reason plaine and undeniable arguments, that a naturall man cannot receive the things of God, then every soule may take notice of and condemne that sottish and foolish conceit that harbours in the minde of many silly poore ignorant soules; if any of you know such, take notice of them; there are



many thinke that they brought grace into the world with them, and that they had grace from their mothers belly; aske them when did you receive grace, when did you receive faith, they will answer, they beleevd ever since they were borne, they had faith ever since they can remember; a great many poore ignorant soules thinke that grace came into the world with them; No, no, be not deceived, faith commeth by hearing, faith is the gift of God, and repentance is the gift of God, *narrow is the way, and straight is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that finde it.* therefore alas, if thou think'st thou broughtest faith with thee into the world, it is an argument that thou never hadst faith, it is an evidence that thou never hadst grace; for if every man should bring faith and grace into the world, then all should goe to heaven, and what is hell made for then? No, no, narrow is the way and exceeding straight is the gate; wee must not thinke to goe to heaven with our hands by our sides. No, no, it is a very narrow way, and few there be that finde it. But then they will pleade, though they had not grace by nature, yet grace is within a haire's breadth of them, they have grace at command; and as it is with a man that leaves a commoditie at a mans house upon liking, if he like it, if it be for his turne he may buy it, if hee like it not hee may refuse it; now after it hath lien by him a while, if it doth not please him, he may returne it into the owners hand againe, he may say, I tooke your commoditie upon liking, and

if it would have beene for my turne I would have bought it, but it will not serve for the use I thought to put it to, and therefore I returne it to you againe, So it is here, most men thinke that grace is left with them upon liking, and they may let it lie by them, and after they have lived in sinne, and tired themselves in their owne imaginations, and in following the sinfull desires of their owne wretched hearts, if after this when they become old, or lie upon their death beds, if then they like grace, they may take it, if not they may let it alone and refuse it: O poore creatures, you will perish and goe to hell hoodwinkt in this kind, you thinke you may have grace for calling for; hereafter when I am old then I will repent, and when I lie upon my death bed, then I will beginne to pray and humble my selfe before God, then you thinke to have grace at your owne liking; if you like the course of grace then you will take it, if you like it not, you will refuse it; must I pray with my family you will say? Well if I like the course happily I will doe it, if not I will neglect it; Alas, alas, I tell thee thou canst as well make a soule as convert a soule, thou canst as well create thy selfe as repent; is it in thy power to say, now I will have grace, now I will not; now I will repent, and now I will not? Oh thinke of it, you shall finde it a harder taske then you are aware of, and if God bee pleased to open your eyes, you will then say, Oh what shall I doe to be saved, then you will see that something must bee done before you can bee saved, then you



Rom. 6. 16.

will finde it to be a hard matter to repent. Doe not think when you lie upon your death beds then you may repent if you will; is it in your power to repent and goe to heaven? no, no, all naturall men are under the power of Sathan, he ruleth them, he commandeth the hearts of the children of disobedience according to his will, and then for sinne and the power thereof looke, *Rom. 6. 16.* know yee not saith the Apostle *that to whom yee yeeld your selves servants to obey, his servants yee are whether of sinne unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* every naturall man is a servant to sinne and a slave to his lusts, hee can doe nothing but that sinne will have him to doe. Take a proud man, whether art thou able to confesse thy pride, to see thy sinne, and humbler thy selfe, and renounce thy folly, art thou able to doe this? No, thou must aske thy pride leave first: So take a covetous man, art thou able to set open thy house, if thou hast wronged any man, or griped or cozened any man? art thou able to say, I will restore him fourefold? art thou able to doe this? No, no, thou must aske thy covetousnesse leave first; now whether you thinke that the divell will suffer you to goe out of his clutches when hee hath power over you, if you thinke sinne will give you leave to forsake your lusts when you are servants to it; I appeale to your owne consciences, and therefore whosoever he be that is a naturall man, let him not cosen himselfe, he hath no power in himselfe to forsake sinne; if heaven were layd downe before him and offered

offered him for the leaving of one lust, hee could as well make a world, as part with one lust for heaven; and therefore every man should labour to see this and say, Lord heretofore I have beene deluded, I thought if I would have grace at any time, I might have grace when I would, if I would not have grace I might choose, and therefore I thought I would have profit now, and pleasures now, and corruptions, and hereafter I will repent, hereafter I will have Christ, but Lord I was deluded, what was it in my power then to entertaine the Lord Iesus? then it was in my power to goe to heaven, to make a world, and to create a soule also? I will assure you it is the almighty power of God that must doe this, in the first of *Ephesians* 19. *Ephes. 1. 19.* there the Apostle giveth us to understand how God worketh in our conversion; *What is the exceeding greatnesse of his power, saith hee, to us ward that beleewe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when hee raised him from the dead, and set him at his owne right hand in the heavenly places.* When the Lords body had lien in the grave three dayes, the selfe same power that raised Christ from the dead; this is the very same almighty power that workes in the heart of a man that is converted in this case; canst thou raise Christ from the dead? if thou canst doe this, then thou mayst repent, if not, then of thy selfe thou canst not repent; for the very same power that raised Christ from the dead, the same power must worke repentance in the heart of a man;



be not therefore deceived, but now looke to it, many Christians have thought that they might have grace and salvation when they would at command, but when God opened their eyes, O then they saw no hope of this, they then knew that the same power that raised Christ out of the grave, the same power must raise them out of the grave of their finnes. I beseech you therefore to be informed, to yeeld to, to be convinced of this truth; the Text saith *a naturall man cannot receive the things of God*, you say you can, who shall we beleieve now? What will you be Atheists, the Lord saith, the word saith, *a naturall doth not receive the things of God*, may be cannot, now whether thy word, or the word of God will stand, thou wilt one day know it to thy everlasting woe, and therefore now be perswaded to see your owne follies, and abandon this foolish conceit.

The second use is an use of examination, namely from the former doctrine delivered, every soule that heareth the word this day, if they will deale plainly with their soules may understand what their condition is; you may reade your owne estates, whether you bee naturall men or spirituall, whether gracious or gracelesse men; what wouldst thou know then, whether thou art a naturall man or no? and if thou beest so, woe be unto thee. The triall is easie in this kind, observe what disposition thou hast to the things of God, observe whether thy soule be affected with them, whether thy soule can give entertainement to them: the nat-

rall man cannot receive the things of God; if thou  
 beest a naturall man, thou then canst not receive  
 grace nor entertaine Christ and salvation; so then  
 canst thou finde that if pleasures come, then thy  
 heart giveth way to them? if profits come, then  
 thy heart is transported with the love thereof?  
 Is thy soule enlarged to these things? dost thou  
 love and desire them? canst thou swallow downe  
 all, entertaine all, digest all very willingly in this  
 kinde: never too much riches, never too much ho-  
 nour, never too much profit, never too much  
 pleasure, is thy soule thus disposed? But when the  
 word calleth for repentance, when the Gospell  
 calleth for selfedeniall at thy hand, & the Lord Je-  
 sus would rule in thy heart, when the Lord would  
 take away all thy sinnes, and all thy corruptions, is  
 it so now that thy heart is weary to heare these? is  
 it so that thou canst not give way to these? then  
 the case is cleare, thou art in a naturall estate, for  
 the Lords sake take notice of it; naturall things  
 please thee, profits and pleasures, sinnes and cor-  
 ruptions please thee, but thou canst not away with  
 the things of the Spirit; thou art therefore a natu-  
 rall man, there is therefore no room for Christ in  
 thy soule, therefore there is no true grace yet  
 wrought in thy soule. In the 8. of the Rom. 3. there  
 faith the Text, *They that are after the flesh, do mind  
 the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spi-  
 rit, the things of the spirit.* Now observe there-  
 fore what relish thou findest in the things here be-  
 low; canst thou relish base courses and ill com-  
 pany?



pany? is any course or advice taken that may ad-  
 duce thee unto wickednesse? canst thou swear  
 with the blasphemers, and swagger with the drun-  
 kard? canst thou relish and approve of these cour-  
 ses? but when the Gospell comes and when a man  
 checkes thee for drinking and swearing, and tells  
 thee that these things stand not with the kingdome  
 of God, the kingdome of Christ consists in righ-  
 teousnesse and joy, and peace in the holy Ghost,  
 and thou must deny thy selfe before thou canst re-  
 ceive the Lord Iesus; if a man shall tell thee that  
 thou must be pure as Christ himselfe is pure, & that  
 the Lord Christ Iesus did not come into the world  
 to make men loose and carelesse, but holy and  
 righteous, to live soberly in this present world,  
 and deny all ungodly and worldly lusts, to re-  
 nounce and abhorre these, when thou hearest that  
 thou must become a foole that thou mayst be  
 made wise, and that the Lord came to refresh those  
 onely that were laden with the burthen of their  
 sinnes, when thou hearest these things, how canst  
 thou take them? most men may give this answer,  
 wee thinke not so, wee beleve it not, nay wee  
 cannot be perswaded of it; is it thus with thee?  
 why then the case is ended, the tryall is done;  
 whoever doth not nay cannot receive the things  
 of God, the Gospell of God, and the things reve-  
 led therein; why the Text saith, and the Lord  
 saith, *that man is a naturall man*. Now many a  
 soule can say, I am not perswaded of these things  
 which the Gospell reveales; why then the case is  
 clear,

cleare, thou sayst plainly thou canst not receive the things of God, why then the Lord saith, the Text saith, and God of heaven saith, that *thou art a naturall man as thou camest into the world, and that thou hast not the grace and spirit of Christ.* But then some may say if I be a natural man what then, what hurt is it? And therefore in the fourth place it is an use of terrour; I presume many that have heard this will say we are so, and shall a man bee ashamed because he is a naturall man? Therefore observe from the former doctrine a word of terrour to all naturall creatures under heaven, I am almost afraid to speake of the misery of a naturall man, my tongue trembles to discover the wretched, fearefull, damned, miserable estate that every naturall man is in, you thinke it is nothing to be in a naturall estate; but I tell you, did you but know what the Lord hath revealed concerning a naturall man, it were enough to breake the backe of a man; a naturall man, why it is enough to make thee goe sighing to thy grave, though thou livest a thousand yeares; if thou beest a naturall man thou hast not received Christ, nay thou art not heare the things of a better life, nay you are not onely still to attaine those things, but you are not able to receive the things of the Lord Iesus, whereby you may be quickned to entertaine those things, and this is that which maketh the soules of naturall men miserable, and the misery of those soules the more miserable; because they are not onely unwilling to bee out of this condition, but they are

at heart bound to God to *Q*ue the good and unwill-  
ing



Rom. 8. 9.

unwilling to be made willing to be out of it; they boast that still they remaine in it, for marke what naturall men say, they bring a reproach upon Gods Saints and children, what say they, you are a man of the Spirit, you are a spirituall professor, one of the holy brethren, are you miserable wretch, dost thou professe thy selfe that thou art not so, but that thou art a naturall man? why then thou art a miserable man, a naturall man, why then a damned man? a naturall man why then an accursed man? thou that professest thou hast no part and portion in the Lord Iesus, take heed that one day hee doth not professe that hee hath no part in thee, *Rom. 8. 9. If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;* thou that dost make a matter of mocking at those that doe walke uprightly before God, and that have the Spirit of God in them, thou that proclaimest to the world that thou hast not the Spirit of God, the Lord proclaimes it as openly to thee, that the Lord Iesus will not owne thee, hee will have nothing to doe with thee, and then what shall become of thee? the devill must take thee at the last day, when all flesh shall appeare before the judgement seate of God, and the booke shall be opened and the actions of men made manifest to Saints and Angels! Oh one drop of mercy then, one dram of comfort then will bee worth a world; Oh then you will wissh, Oh that Christ would save us; no, no, you that were naturall men, Christ will not owne you now, you had none at all of the Spirit, you have opposed the good Spirit of God and flouted it, these

these are your spirituall men, these are your holy ones, thus you have mocked and blasphemed, you have sayd the Spirit of Christ is not mine, and therefore Christ saith hee is none of thine; thy estate therefore here is miserable, but thrice wretched and miserable will it be hereafter; men may imagine great matters, and boast of themselves, of their riches, and their wisdome, and their honour and preferment in the world, but if they be naturall, there is small good at all in them, they may have lands, and preferments, and honours, but they have small good in them, and therefore miserable needs must their estate bee here, but farre worse hereafter. Doe not thinke ye may climbe up to heaven by your owne imaginations; good Lord, how can a man that is in a naturall condition sleepe quietly? with what contentment can hee walke, when a man goeth into his fields to recreate and delight himselfe, and then considers the meanes that God hath offred him, whereby hee might attaine unto grace and salvation, when the soule thinks with it selfe, I may goe into my ground to be eased and refreshed, but alas I am but a naturall man, what therefore shall become of this poore soule of mine; he considers with himselfe, I am but in a naturall condition, and therefore in a miserable, damned condition, and then when hee returnes home, still this strikes in his minde, I am but naturall, flesh and blood, and therefore never shall receive any spirituall comfort; but when these things shall neither helpe me nor I be helpe-



fall unto them; Oh what then shall become of me? I have had no part in Christ here, and therefore I can never looke that hee will owne me hereafter; it is a great evill for a man to have no good, but this is the misery of a man that hee cannot procure any good, and this is the misery of all miseries, that he cannot desire to be out of this misery, and yet this is the condition of every naturall man, you therefore that are naturall goe into corners and mourne for your selves and those that belong unto you, and for those to whom you have relation; you husbands that have wives which be naturall, and you wives who have naturall husbands, goe and mourne for them and for your selves, and sigh to heaven for mercy, and pray to God that hee would be mercifull unto them and forgive them their sinnes, and bring them out of their naturall estate, and make them able to entertaine Christ, and grace, and salvation. Parents mourne for your children that are naturall, when thou lookest upon thy child whom thou dearly lovest, and whom perhaps hath good naturall parts, and is obedient unto thee in outward respects, when thou beholdest this child of thine, and considerest that hee is in a naturall estate, then this may peirce thee to the very heart, then thou mayst burst out and say, woe is me that this child of mine was ever borne, for he is in a naturall condition, and therefore in a miserable condition, hee is a naturall child, and therefore a child of the devell, truly he is my sonne, and for ought I know if  
God

God have not mercy upon him, the child of the  
divell also; a naturall child is a damned child, a  
naturall man is an accursed man; consider this,  
doth not the Word say this, doth not the Lord say  
this, that ~~a naturall man cannot receive the things of~~  
God, and therefore deale with your owne soules,  
and with the soules of thy friends, as men use to  
doe with those that are sicke, hast thou a child or  
a husband sicke of any disease, thou goest to the  
Phisitian to aske his counsell concerning the disea-  
ses, he tells the disease is not dangerous and dead-  
ly, it may be helped, and if hee be but able to re-  
ceive those things which he shall prescribe he will  
warrant his recovery, but now if the disease con-  
tinue, and hee be not able to take any food, nor re-  
ceive any Phisicke, then the disease cannot bee  
helped, health cannot be procured; you that are  
naturall men you are sicke of corruptions, the di-  
sease I must confesse is not deadly, if you can but  
take mercy & receive grace, which is the phisick of  
the soule, then you may recover, but as long as  
you remaine in your naturall estate, you can re-  
ceive no spirituall foode, no spirituall phisicke,  
but cast up all, and therefore you are gone, you are  
but dead men. I tell you, you have many bre-  
thren, many friends, many children that are sicke, I  
tell you, they are proud, and carelesse, and loose,  
and prophane; but this is their greatest miserie  
above all the rest, they cannot take any spirituall  
foode, they cannot receive any spirituall good  
thing, but cast up all, and vomit up all; the power



of the Gospell prevailes not, your counsell they will not heare, the Ministers exhort, admonish, reprove, they will not regard, they cannot away with any spirituall phisicke; I tell you, this will be their death, and if God be not mercifull, their damnation also, and therefore goe and mourne for your children and for your friends if they be naturall, and pray for them. When a man is sicke of some disease, if hee can take no foode, if no phisicke will stay with him, nor worke upon him, but he casts up all, then his wife shee sits in one corner of the house weeping, and his children in another corner mourning and lamenting, now if one comes in and asks them how doth your husband, or how doth your father, Oh then they fall wringing their hands, Oh my father or my husband is but a dead man, if hee could but take any thing, then there were some hope of life, but as nothing will stay with him, but as soone as he takes it he vomits it up againe, and therefore now there is no expectation of his recovery, this is the condition of many of your friends and children, they can take nothing which should doe them good, they can receive no spirituall good things; no counsell can take place with them, the word of God prevailes not with them; O mourne for them therefore, they are in a miserable estate, they are but dead men, they will be damned; if they could but receive the things of the Spirit, then there were some comfort; but alas, how can a man receive salvation? is it not by the Word? why then if the Word

Word will not prevaile with them or take any place in them, nor worke upon them, how then shall they come to salvation, why they must therefore be damned, they must therefore perish, they must be cast into utter confusion and destruction for evermore, Oh mourne therefore and pray for those which belong unto you if they be in a naturall condition.

In the last place, if it be so dangerous to bee in a naturall condition, then it is a word of exhortation to you all, that you would labour to get out of this naturall corruption. I intreate you for the Lord Iesus sake, as you love your owne soules, whoever you be that heare this doctrine if you be naturall men, give no sleepe unto your eyes, nor slumber unto your eye-lids, give no rest to your soules nor contentment to your hearts, untill you have studied by all meanes possible to recover your selves out of your naturall condition, beginne speedily and persevere constantly in the meanes that God hath appointed, that the Lord may bestow that power upon you whereby you may be enabled to receive grace and salvation offered you, that so it may goe well with you for ever, *Iohn 3. 27.* there saith the Text, *a man cannot receive any thing unlesse it be given him from heaven,* so then the case is cleare, though thou of thy selfe canst not receive grace and salvation, yet God can give aibilitie to receive them; away therefore from yourselves, & look up higher, flie unto God for strength and sufficiencie, I would have such a naturall man  
fear:



feare continually that God will cut him off, and than he is damned for ever; Oh consider of this a naturall man, why hee may be affraid that Gods judgements will every moment, in every place fall upon him, both at home & abroad, within & without, hee may feare they will fall upon him upon every occasion hee meetes withall, when hee goeth in the way, when hee sitteth still, when hee eates, when he sleepes, what businesse soever hee is about, in every place, at all times, upon all occasions, hee may feare that the curse of God will fall upon him. A naturall man may continually stand in feare and consider, if God should cut me off by death, what then would become of me, my body must returne to the ground, and my soule that must go into everlasting torments in hell fire among the devill and his angels, *where the worme never dyeth, nor the fire never goeth out*, and therefore sure my estate is woefull, and my condition miserable. But you will say, a naturall man cannot receive any good, why should hee then be counsell'd to receive the things of God, as grace and salvation? this is a cavill of *Bellarmin*, and thus I answer it, we have no spirituall abilitie in our selves to performe any spirituall duty, but yet wee have ability to performe some morall actions; a man hath restraining and preventing grace whereby he is able to wait upon God in the meanes, that so he may be enabled to receive grace, and therefore as long as the parts and members of your bodies and the faculties of your soules continue, as long as your understandings

understandings and memories indure, why cannot you bestow your bodies to come to Church as well as to goe to the Alehouse? why cannot you bestow your eyes as well in reading, as in carding and dicing? God hath given you liberty to use these meanes, that so you might receive grace, and therefore this objection is onely a cavill of *Bellarmino*. God doth not punish a man because he cannot get faith, but because he will not use the meanes whereby he might get faith, wee may waite upon God in his ordinances, wee may attend upon the meanes; these things you may doe and those things you have power to doe; you may doe naturall and civill actions, and therefore you should imploy your selves in hearing the Word, and reading, and praying; you should use the meanes which God ordained for the working of grace in yours soules, when you come under the ministry of God; hereby you may be converted, and therefore you must come, that so grace may be wrought in your hearts, and that you may be converted.

And therefore I will advise you of three things which are in the power of natural men to performe as directions to the use of the former meanes appointed by God for the working of grace; First I would have every naturall man thoroughly convinced of the misery hee is in, and informed of his owne insufficiencie, *Ier. 10. 23.* there saith the Text, *O Lord I know that the way of man is not in himselfe, it is not in man that maketh so direct his owne steppes;* and the Apostle *Paul* hee

R

taketh



taketh it to himselfe, *I know* saith hee, *that in my*  
*selfe there dwelleth no good thing,* this is a great  
 matter that wee presume of our selves; we thinke  
 we can stand of our selves, though we never use the  
 meanes to have our weakenesse strengthened, and  
 this is the reason that wee never seeke to God in  
 the use of the meanes, take therefore the  
 course of the Apostle, and say *in me dwelleth no*  
*good thing,* suffer your selves to be thoroughly in-  
 formed and convinced of your owne misery and  
 weakenesse, and confesse this truth; I confesse I  
 am a naturall and carnall man, and therefore in  
 my flesh there is no good at all. Secondly, when  
 you have thus done, and when your hearts are per-  
 swaded of your owne misery, and you confesse  
 there is no good in you; when you can say, Lord  
 what a stout heart have I, what a many gracious  
 promises and godly counsellis have I had, and yet  
 never would receive or give way to any of them,  
 and therefore there is no good in mee; and then  
 thirdly, when you have done this, then convince  
 your owne hearts that there is an All-sufficiency  
 in the promise that the Spirit is able to doe good  
 unto your soules, *Ezech. 11. 18.* there saith the  
 Text, *I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit*  
*within them, I will take away their stony heart, and*  
*give them a heart of flesh,* so that however it is true,  
 that we have no sufficiency in our selves, yet the  
 Lord Iesus hath enough; the Spirit is able to doe  
 that for us which wee are not able to doe for our  
 selves; and therefore in the third place, when

Ezech. 11. 18.

thou art throughly informed of these two things, then come unto Gods ordinances, and looke up unto God, and waite upon him in the use of the meanes; it is a fine passage of David, *Lord saith he, teach me the way of the Spirit;* as if hee had sayd, Lord I have a naughty spirit, I have a naughty heart, but Lord thou hast a good Spirit, lead me by that good Spirit of thine in the wayes of uprightness; Thus doe you waite upon God in his ordinances, and say, Lord thou hast promised that thou wilt put a new soyle into thy people, and create a new heart in them, and throw their finnes into the bottome of the sea, and that thou wilt cause them to walke in thy wayes. Thou hast promised to give thy Spirit to them that seeke it, Lord make good this thy promise unto mee; take away this wretched sinfull heart of mine, and create a new heart in me, and direct me by thy Spirit to walke in the wayes of thy Commandments. It is true Lord, a Leaper cannot take away his spot, a Blackamoore cannot change his hew; but Lord thou canst make a Blackamoore white, and thou canst cleanse the Leaper; though I be a dead man thou canst put life into me, though I can doe nothing, yet thou canst doe all things, I am a blackamoore, but thou canst make me of a white hew; I am a Leaper, but thou canst take away my spot; I am naturall and carnall, I can doe nothing, but Lord thou canst make me other things; good Lord give me that thy blessed Spirit may teach me to know the things belonging



to my everlasting peace; this doe, above all take heede that you doe not deferre the time; Oh deferre not the wayting upon God in the use of the meanes; Why? because you have no power in your selves to helpe your selves; it is not in your power to receive Christ, and entertaine salvation, and therefore begin speedily to attend upon Gods ordinances, that at length the Lord may put a new spirit into you, and worke upon you to your everlasting peace and comfort. I exhort you above all things not to deferre the time and say, wee will gather the flower while it is Greene, while our youth continues we will follow our pleasures, and take up our sports, and when wee come to be old, then we will turne over a new leafe, and on our death beds then wee will repent; alas, alas, how wilt thou thinke to doe it in thine old age, when thou couldst never doe it in thy youth? and therefore doe not thus delude thy owne soule; thou thinkest when thou lyest on thy death bed, if thou doest but send for a Minister, then hee will bring salvation to thee presently; but I tell thee though all the Ministers under heaven should preach mercy unto thee, though all the Angels in heaven should exhort and intreat thee to entertaine salvation, though thou shouldest have all glory and all happinesse layd downe as it were upon a table before thee, if the Lord should say here is all glory and happinesse, doe but beleve and take it and it shall be thine, thou shalt be made partaker of it for ever; yet consider in thy naturall condition thou

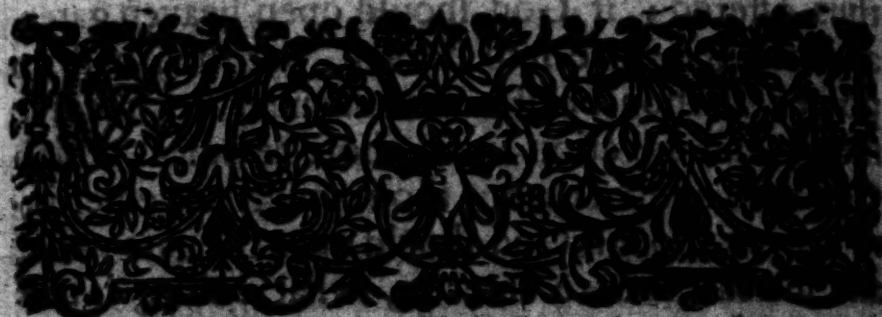
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hast no power to receive happinesse and glory,  
thus offered; if God should open heaven gates,  
and bid thee goe into heaven, yet thou hast no  
power, if thou beest a naturall man to receive  
mercy and salvation upon those termes which  
God hath offered them, thou couldst not enter in-  
to heaven, though God should open the gate wide,  
and intreat thee to enter in, what a thing is this  
then, when neither Minister can perswade thee,  
nor Angels exhort thee, nor Christ himselfe in-  
treat thee to take mercy, yet thou shouldst thinke  
in thy old age or upon thy deathbed to have mercy  
and salvation at command; why deferre not there-  
fore this worke untill the last, but make speede, be-  
ginne betime and hold on constantly to the end,  
that at last God may take away your corruptions,  
and give you his spirit, and raise you out of the grave  
of your finnes, doe this because you see it is need-  
full to be done, it is not in your power to doe good  
unto your soules, or receive good, and therefore be-  
ginne betimes and wait upon God in the meane,  
that so you may have grace and salvation thereby.

R. 3

Exaen.





*Ezra ch. 11. 19.*  
*I will take away their stony heart, and give them a heart of flesh.*



According to our Order intended, and Course propounded, we have laid downe five generall circumstances, & have chosen severall texts answerably: whereout we might observe the same. foure of those five we have already handled, and now we are come to the last Circumstance, which is this, Howsoever a naturall man cannot receive the Lord Iesus, yet the Lord will make all his that belong to the election of Grace willing to receive him, and then he will bestow Christ Iesus upon them, and grace and salvation by him: and for this purpose I have chosen this text, and as our course is, I will not meddle with every Doctrine in the text, which are sixe in number, but chuse that onely which fits best for our purpose. But before I can come to lay downe

downe the point of Doctrine, two passages must be opened: first, what is meant by heart, secondly, what is meant by a stony heart, and what by a fleshy heart; and these two being opened, the Doctrine will be plaine and lie faire: first for the first: a heart in Scripture, besides that which it signifieth naturally; is applied to the will of a man, or to that ability which is in a reasonable soule, whereby he willet or rejecteth a thing, this is put for a heart in Scripture, together with love, delight, joy, hatred and griefe, which are attendants upon this will; as a man will have such a thing, why? because he loves it, and delightes in it; and hee againe refuseth such a thing and will not have it, why? because hee hates it, and because it is displeasing unto him; and this is the meaning of that place, *Mat. 15. 19. Out of the heart proceede evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemie.* Secondly, the Will is put in phrase of Scripture, not onely for ability of the soule whereby it wills, but for the same spirituall disposition, that is, in the will & affections of a man, in this kind the temper and frameablenesse of the Will to any action is termed by the name of heart in Scripture; for there is somewhat in the Will, whereby it is carried to any worke: looke as it is with a Bowle it runneth, because it is a round thing, but that it runneth at such and such a marke, is because it hath a Bias upon it, whereby it is swayd and carried to that marke; so it is with the heart of a man, there is not onely an ability therein, whereby a man is in-

abled.



abled to will, but there is a frame and a disposition in the Will, either to good or evil, either to grace or sinne; and as the will of a man is biased and swayed, so a man is said to will good or evil, not in regard of the naturall faculty of the Will, but in regard of the disposition of that facultie which doth carrie the faculty to the performance of any worke: now a righteous man out of the disposition of his heart, is carried to yeeld obedience unto Gods commandements; and a wicked man out of the frame and temper of his heart is carried after lusts and distempers and sinnefull abominations; and this is the meaning of that place, *Deut. 29. 4. The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive to this day, why?* they had a heart, for they were naturall men, they had the naturall faculty of the Will and the understanding and affections, but the meaning is, they had not the gracious disposition in their wils, whereby they might be carried and inabled to will that which was pleasing to God, and might be comfortable unto themselves: it is a pretious phrase, *Mat. 12. 35. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evill man out of the evill treasure of his heart bringeth forth evill things:* there is a heart in both, and there is a treasure in both also; but there is a good treasure in the heart of a godly man, and out of this comes good things, so out of the treasure of a wicked mans heart, comes evill things; there is a treasure of love and holinesse, and goodnesse in the heart of a gracious man, whereby hee is carried to walke

*Deut. 29. 4.*

*Mat. 12. 35.*

walke holily and unblameably before God and man; good words and good actions come from the good treasure, that is, from a good disposition of the soule; againe, a wicked man hath a heart, and he hath a treasure also, he hath a treasure of pride, and a treasure of covetousnesse, and a treasure of all manner of corruptions, and these carry him to wicked speeches and leud actions, hee talkes loosely & lives basely; so that there is a disposition good or bad in the soule of a man, and this is termed a will or a heart in Scripture: now in both these senses wee understand not a heart here in the Text, but in the latter onely; God will give them a heart, that is, God will give them wills and hearts disposed to that which is good.

The second passage to be opened is this, namely, what is meant by a stony, what by a fleshie heart; First what is meant by a stony heart; a heart is said to be stonie by way of resemblance, because it is of the nature of a stone, looke what the nature of a stone is, such is the nature of a heart compared thereunto, a stony heart, that is, an unsensible and an uncapable heart; a stone that is insensible, it receiveth no impression, set a scale upon a stone and presse it downe never so hard, & you may break the stone in peeces, but it will receive no impression, it wil take no print; but now set a scale upon waxe, and that will receive any impression that a man stampes upon it, so it is with a stony, stout, sturdy heart, though God knocke it in peeces it will not be humbled, it will receive no impression, but resists and



beates backe the meanes of grace and salvation offered and revealed unto it, if the Lord set a stampe of humiliation upon it that will not be humbled, it will receive no stampe but makes it flie backe and bound upward: so that a stony heart is a hard sturdie heart capeable of no impression.

Secondly, what is meant by a heart of flesh, and that is quite contrary to a stony heart, it is like unto flesh, soft, tender, easie, and pliable, willing to take any impression that comes upon it; so that now a fleshie heart is nothing else but a heart lovingly reachable, and humbly tractable to the Lord, willing to entertaine any impression that it shall please the Lord to stampe upon it; if God commands any thing, that obeyeth, if God threatens, that trembles; it is said of *Isaiah* that he had a melting heart: looke as it is with waxe, if you set a seale upon it, just as the print of the seale is, so is the print in the waxe which it leaves behinde it; so it is with a fleshie, softly, pliable heart, it receives any stampe that God puts upon it; when the Lord saith feare, that trembles, when the Lord saith love, that entertaines it, when the Lord commands any thing, that yeeldes obedience to his commands, this is an humble and a pliable spirit: and this is the substance of the Text, and the intendment of the Prophet therein, is thus much: In the beginning of the Chapter, about the seventh Verse, the Lord threatned to inflict many judgements upon the people of *Israel*, because they had not walked in his statutes; after the Lord had done this, yet he tells them in the 16.

Verse

Verse, if they would walke in his wayes, he would be a Sanctuary unto them, & he would make them better than ever they were, and hee would doe better for them than ever hee did, but how will hee doe this? Why saith he, I will take away that stony sturdy heart which is in them, and will give them a frameable heart and a teachable heart, which shall yeeld to whatsoever I cammand, and then they will be able to cast away all those evils which they have embraced, and performe all those holy duties which they have neglected, the heart which God takes away from them cannot be meant the heart it selfe, the naturall facultie of willing, and the heart which hee gives them, cannot be meant the bare facultie it selfe, but the rebellious disposition that was in the facultie the Lord removeth, and that same teachable, frameable disposition he putteth into the facultie, whereby their hearts should be carried to that which was pleasing to God, & comfortable to themselves. I intend to speake of two things concerning Gods taking away of this same stony heart, and giving a heart of flesh unto his people: first, that God doth this, that hee is the Author of it; secondly, I will speake of the circumstance of time when God doth this, when he thus workes upon the hearts of his chosen, sometimes sooner sometimes later; and this, same circumstance of time when the Lord doth this is double; first in regard of the meanes, the Lord doth thus worke upon the hearts of those which belong to the election of grace, when hee gives them the meanes of



salvation when they have the Sunne-shine of the Gospell shining in their faces: The second circumstance of this time, is in regard of the men whom the Lord will thus worke upon, some sooner, some later, some in all ages; some in their young and tender age, some in their middle age, and some, though very few, in their old age: First I will speake of the Authour of this, and that is God, hee takes away the stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh to his servants. The Doctrine out of the words is, The taking away of the indisposition of the soule to any good dutie, and the fitting, framing, and disposing of a soule to performe any spirituall service, is the alone worke of God, hee removes the indisposition of the soule, and hee puts the disposition to any good into the soules of his; the case is cleare, if we reason after this manner what is a stony heart? A stony heart is a sturdy, unteachable heart, uncapable and indisposed to any good; what is a heart of flesh? it is a lowly, teachable, pliable heart, willing to receive any impression that God stampes upon it, who takes away the one? The Lord, who gives the other? The Lord. So that both the remooving of the stony heart is the Lords worke, and the giving of the fleshy heart is the Lords worke also, *I will take away their stony heart, and I will give them a heart of flesh.* Nay the Lord doth make it his chiefest prerogative to doe this worke for a poore sinner, *Ezech. 36. 25. I will poure cleane water upon you saith the Lord, and yee shall be cleane from all your filthinesse, and your Idols, I will cleanse*

Ezech. 36. 25.

cleansc you: A new heart also will I give you, and put a new spirit within you, I will take away the stony heart, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and therefore wee shall take notice of it; this great worke of conversion is compared with the worke of creation, God onely created man, and God onely converteth a man; how was it when darkenesse was over the face of the earth, *Let there bee light* said the Lord, *and there was light*, the same God that created light, the same God doth shine in our hearts, nay this worke of conversion is sayd to be one of the greatest workes of God, as if God did the best he could doe for a poore sinner when hee converts him. *To whom is the arme of the Lord revealed*, saith the Prophet *Esay*, that is, to whom is the utmost power of the Almighty God revealed, the Lord putteth forth his whole strength upon poore sinners when he converts them unto himselfe. The power of Gods strength, the depth of Gods wiledome, and the riches of Gods mercy is discovered in this worke of conversion; here is power against all power, and strength above all strength; for the Lord doth not meete with the soule of a sinner in the worke of conversion, as hee did in the worke of creation with the world, for when he made the world, hee met with nothing to resist him, but he onely spoke the word, hee commanded and it was made; but when the Lord cometh to meete with the soule of a poore sinner, to open his eyes and convert him unto himselfe, and bring him home, hee meeth with the whole frame



1 Cor. 14. 24.

frame of all creatures opposing and resisting him; the divell and the world without, and sinne and corruption within; when the Lord comes to convert a sinner, hee meetes with all these, with sinne, Sathan, and the world resisting him, and therefore here must needs be power against all strength that opposeth him, here must needs bee wisdom against all pollicie that resists him, and here must needs be wonderfull mercy against all weakenesse and miserie, and therefore 1 Cor. 14. 24. there faith the Text, *If all prophesie, and there come in one that beleeveeth not, or unlearned, he is rebuked of all, and judged of all;* and so are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so he will fall downe on his face and worship God, and say plainly, God is in you indeede, here the Text faith, when the Lord cometh to speake home to a poore sinner, a poore soule, he comes into the Congregation, & though he be simple the word is wise and powerfull and that discovereth what is in his heart, man is not able to doe this, but God can doe this, and then the soule will say, God is in you indeede, as who should say, Here is God, or else I had never beene humbled, or else my finnes had never beene subdued, or else my soule had never beene wrought upon, the sinner that is stricken with this worke, he professeth plainly, that here is the stroake of God, and power of God, and wisdom of God, which was able to discover all things that were in my heart, and take away this stubborne heart of mine, Oh this is the worke of God indeede.

The

The grounds of the point why it is necessary that God should be the Author both of taking away the stony heart and giving the heart of flesh are these, if we doe but consider the nature of the stoniness and the fleshiness of the heart, it will appeare that God onely can take away the one and give the other. First if we consider the nature of the stony heart, and the distempers thereof, it will appeare that it must bee the worke of the Lord onely to take it away; and not to follow any other similitude then the Text affords; I will shew the similitude and resemblance that is betweene the sturdy stout heart of a sinner and a stone, by which it shall bee made manifest, that none but the Almighty power of God is able to remoove it. Now in a stone observe three particulars, which discover the nature of it; first the ground of all, the hardness which is in the stone is from hence, there is a close fastning, combining, and knitting of the parts together which is the ground of the hardness that is therein; as for example, take a path, if it be continually plowed up, it will bee soft and loose, but if many walke upon it, if it be continually trod upon then it will be hard; what is the reason of this, namely this hardness proceeds from the close fastning and setting of the earth together, this it is which makes the way hard, but if it were daily plowed, and the earth continually loosened, it would then need be soft; But when there is a natural fastning and compiling of the earth together, it cannot but be hard.



Secondly, from this fastning of the parts of a stone together, as there comes hardnesse, so also from this hardnesse ariseth a great strength in the stone, and that is the reason that the hardest things are marvelous strong; a child before his joynts be settled is but weake, he is not come to his strength, but a man when his parts are settled, and his joynts throughly knit together, then wee use to say, hee is come to his full strength; and so it is in mettals, those mettals that are closest knit together and most nearely concocted, they are sayd to bee strongest mettalls, as Gold is sayd to be a stronger mettall then Silver, and Silver is sayd to be a stronger mettall then Lead, because the parts thereof are more nearely settled and more closely concocted: So it is the nature of stones, those stones whose parts are most combined together, as Flints, they are sayd to be the hardest stones, and those whose parts are not so closely knit, they are sayd to be more soft and of lesse strength.

Thirdly, from the hardnesse and strength of a stone, there comes a resistance against any thing from without it, because the parts of a stone are knit together, therefore it is hard, and from the hardnesse thereof proceedes strength; and being hard and strong in the third place it resists and beats backe any thing that falls upon it, as if you knocke against a stone with a hammer, it resists it and makes it flie backe by reason of the strength and hardnesse of it; Even so it is with the soule of every poore sinner, of every sinfull creature under heaven,

ven, it hath an inward secret kind of union betweene sinne and its selfe, betweene corruption and its owne nature. The heart of a poore sinfull soule hath a neere combination with sinne, there is a fast closure betweene sinne and the soule, and therefore sinne in the Scripture is termed by the name of *the old man*, as who should say, The sinne and corruption that is in a poore sinner, is as it were another nature in him, in so much that the union and combination that is betweene sinne and the soule, is farre stronger then any other bond of nature, and this is the reason of that phrase, *Luke 21. 16.* there saith the Text, *Ye shall be betrayed also of your parents, and of your brethren and kinsmen, and some of you shall be put to death, and yet shall be hated of men all for my names sake;* &c this is the reason, because the union that is betweene sinne and the soule of a wicked man exceeds all other bonds of nature; as for example, if a naughty wicked father have a godly religious child, the father will neglect those duties to his child which even nature it selfe teacheth him to performe; and if a wicked Jew or Gentile have a good father, he will not discharge those duties unto him which nature binds him unto, but the father he hates the sonne, and the sonne he hates the father, the mother hates the daughter, and the daughter hates the mother, and they break all bonds both, of nature and religion; the wicked father will doe any thing against his sonne, before the bond that is betweene sinne and the soule shall be broken, before this is broken



broken he will not abide the presence of his sinne, say that which is most unreasonable to consider, a wicked lewd ungracious man will lose his life, he will spend his owne heart blood before hee will leave one sinfull beloved lust or corruption, and the reason of this is, because there is a nearer union, and a closer combination betweene sinne and the soule, then betweene all relation, that nature can put upon a man, inso much that a man will rather have his sinnes and his lusts then his owne child; say such is the union betweene sinne and the soule, that it becomes a God unto the soule; looke as it is with a stone, the parts thereof being closely fastned and neerely settled together, it becomes marvellous strong and hard, so when God hath forsaken the soule, and it closeth with his corruptions, this union that is betweene the soule and its corruptions is marvellous strong and firme, say so strong and firme that there is no meane under heaven, no creature in the world that is able to breake this union, and dissolve this combination that is betweene sinne and the soule, unlesse the Lord by his Almighty power come and breake this concord and conspiracy that is betweene sinne and the soule, against himselfe and the glory of his name; and for the truth hereof observe this, all outward meanes are too scant, too narrow, too short to breake the union betweene the soule and sinne, as it is with the body of a man, if there were a great and an old dislemper in a mans stomacke, if a man should put a rich doublet upon him and lay

him.

him in a Featherbed, and use all other outward  
meanes, this would doe him no good, because  
the disease is within, and is become as it were ano-  
ther nature in him, it is an old distemper that hath  
eaten into his very bowels, and therefore all out-  
ward meanes cannot make a separation betwene  
the disease and the body, because the disease be-  
ing inward they cannot come nere it. Talt so it is  
with the soule of a man, a mans heart will have his  
sinne; there is an inward combination betwene  
the soule and sinne; now all meanes, as the Word,  
and the like is outward, and can doe no good in this  
kind, they cannot break the union betwene a mans  
heart and his corruptions, unlesse God give a bles-  
sing to these meanes, unlesse the Lord by his Al-  
mighty power and infinixe wisdom make a sepa-  
ration betwene sinne and the soule, and dissolve  
this union. The soule saith, I will have my sinne,  
and I will have my life, and I will have my God,  
though I die for it, there is a strong league made  
betwene the heart of a sinner and his lusts, and  
therefore all outward meanes can not possibly  
breake this league; looke as it is with a strong  
stomack, if you give it any ordinary meate the  
strength of the stomake is above the meate, and  
turnes the meate into the nature of it selfe, so it is  
with a corrupt heart that hath made a league with  
his lusts; all outward meanes and ordinances of  
God, a corrupt heart converts them and turns  
them aside to his everlasting destruction; the in-  
strumentall cause is alwayes under the principall;



the soule of a man is a soveraigne commander, this way all outward meanes are but instrumentall muscles, and the heart of a man is above them, and therefore they may as well harden a man as soften his heart, and humble his soule; a man can receive no good thereby, unlesse it please God to overpower this distemper that is in a man, and break the neare union and firme league that is betweene sinne and the soule.

Secondly, as there is a neare union betweene sinne and the soule, so in the second place as from the knitting of the parts of a stone together, there comes a strength to resist the blow; so there is a marvelous power, a soveraigne command that sinne setteth up, and Sathan possesseth in the soule; nay so strong a power it is, for therein lyeth the strength of the argument, that nothing can overpower it and overcome it, but the Almighty come it power of the Lord, for this is the meaning of that place, of Saint Paul, *1 Corinth. 15. 56. The sting of death is sinne, and the strength of sinne is the Law*; so that a man may see so strong as the Law is, so strong is sinne, and therefore the strength thereof must needs be great; I open that place of the Apostle thus, *The sting of death is sinne, and the strength of sinne is the Law*; looke as it is with a King when a malefactor is apprehended and convicted of high treason, the king giveth up the malefactor into the hand of the jaylour, and giveth him authoritie to keepe him in what prison or dungeon hee will, and tyrannize over him as he list.

the jaylour now hath not power of himselfe onely,  
but is armed also with authority from the King,  
he hath a commission from the King that hee may  
dispose of the Traytour as hee pleaseth, hee may  
keepe him in what prison hee will, and tyrannize  
over him as he pleaseth and as hee seeth good, and  
the reason is, because hee hath authority from the  
King to backe him, and he hath as much authority  
as the King, because the King doth this by him,  
so it is with the blessed will of God, every poore  
soule rebels against him and breakes his Lawes,  
and therefore the Lord taketh notice of it, and trea-  
son is brought against him, and hee is condemned  
for it, and then he delivers him up into the power  
of sinne, and into the hands of the devill, as who  
should say, Take him sinne, and take him Sathan,  
and hale him into damnation and tyrannize over  
him according to your owne minds, thus God  
giveth them authority over him; mee thinkes I  
heare the Lord say thus; Let all occasions down-  
neere over him, let all corruptions take place in  
him, hee hath opposed my Lawes; I will never  
helpe him more, hee hath transgressed my Com-  
mandements, my Spirit shall never assist him more,  
take him sinne, take him Sathan, and dispose of  
him according to your owne pleasure; so that now  
sinne and Sathan have not onely their owne power  
over this soule, but they have power from God,  
and they are backed with authority from the Law,  
in this kind Sathan may say, This soule must bee  
damned, I have Law for it, by the vertue of the Law



I prevaile against him, and domineere over him; God hath given mee authoritie to tyrannize over him, thus *the strength of sinne is the Law*. Now he that must come and rescue this soule, and deliver it from the power of sinne and Sathan, must be able to equalize and answer the strength of the Law, and this none can doe, the Law of God, none can beare the strength of it, but he that is perfect God, none but the Lord Iesus Christ, none can deliver the soule and rescue it from the power of sinne and Sathan, but hee; this is the reason of that unconceivable and admirable power that a mans corruptions have over him, a man would wonder to see that a base lust or corruption should so domineere and tyrannize over a man, and make a man such a slave thereunto; the reason is, because the strength of sinne is the Law. God in his just judgement hath given over a sinner into the hand of sinne and Sathan, now the Lord Iesus openly cometh and taketh away this power, and overcometh this strength for the rescuing of a poore soule this way, and hereby wee may conceive that the wisdom and power of Gods mercy goeth beyond the power and wisdom of Gods justice, as I may so say; for what saith the Law, and what doth the justice of God require, the Law saith *Doe and live*, justice saith, if *Adam* disobey the Commandements of God hee shall be saved, if *Adam* sinne he shall be damned. But then the wisdom and power of Gods mercy comes and saith, a man shall not die though he doth not

not keepe all Gods Commandements; but how is this done, namely this way, Christ which is perfect God and man, commeth and suffereth for man, he comes and doeth that which man should have done, and therfore though man doe it not, yet he shall not be condemned, so that our Saviour by his death did satisfie for us, and gave full contentment to the Law of God, so that now the Justice of God hath nothing to say to a poore soule, and Christ by his resurrection he did overcome the power of sinne and Satan, so that now mark what followes, if any thing hindereth the soule from being saved, it is because either Gods Justice is not satisfied, or else because the power of sinne and Satan is not abated, but Christ by his death did satisfie the Law of God, and by his resurrection did overcome sinne and Satan, and therefore these cannot hinder it from salvation, and this is the ground how it cometh to passe that the Lord onely, and no other creature can deliver a soule from the strength of sinne and power of Satan, which have the strength of the Law to backe them.

Thirdly, as in a stone there is a close setting and a close knitting of the parts together, from whence comes the hardness thereof, and secondly as from this hardness there proceedeth strength, and as in the third place from this strength ariseth a resistance against the blow that is smitten upon it, so it is with a stony heart, there is a close union between sinne and it, secondly, by reason of this union sinne comes to have a strengthening power.



power in the soule, and not onely so, but in the third place, there is a great resistance in the soule against Gods Command; Look as it is with a stone, if a man striketh a blow upon it, it resisteth the blow and beates it backe, so it is with the soule, with a stony heart; the Word, the Sacraments, Admonitions, Reprooves, Counsells, Exhortations, they enter not into it, they prevaile not with it, but it resists and obpposeth all meanes of grace and salvation that are offered unto it; what helpe soever God bestowes upon it, it beates it backe, it will not be disposed, it will not be framed and fashioned according to Gods holy Will, *Zach. 7. 12.* there saith the Text, *They made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should beare the law, and the words which the Lord of Hosts sent by his Spirit in the Ministry of the former Prophets; that is,* they closed with their corruptions and grew strong in their corruptions, and resisted the commandments of the Lord, and therefore it is said of *Ahab*, that he hardened his heart, that is, he strengthened his heart in sinne, and would not obey the commandment of the Lord, but refused to let the people of *Israel* goe: when there comes to be a neare union betweene sinne and the soule, then the soule doth strengthen it selfe in sinne, and opposeth the Law of God, the proud man saith, he will have his lust, let God say what hee will, the covetous man hee will have his corruption, let God say what hee will, and the drunkard hee will have his owne way, and the adulterer hee will take

*Zach. 7. 12.*

up his owne course; let God say what he will they grow strong in their finnes, and therefore resist all meanes which may be for their good, untill the Lord by his almightie power doth breake this fast knot that is betweene corruption and the soule, and removes the power and strength of sinne, and then by a strong hand takes away this resistance and over-powers a soule in this case: so that then, to gather up all together; if it be so that the union betweene sinne and the soule cannot be dissolved but by God alone, if the strength and power of sinne and Satan cannot be vanquished but onely by the Lord, if the resistance that commeth from sinne cannot be taken away and removed, but by the worke of the Spirit of God: then the case is cleare, and the point evident, That it is God which taketh away the stony heart and giveth a heart of flesh: if God alone by his almighty power doth these things, then he is the authour of this worke, it is his worke to doe this in the soule of a poore sinfull creature.

The first Vse is an use of instruction; from hence wee may see, that therefore this great worke of conversion, the fitting and preparing of a poore sinner to entertaine the Lord Iesus, is a worke of great weight, it is a worke not of ordinary, but of marvellous and admirable difficulty; if it be the worke of the Lord onely, if nothing else can doe this worke but it lieth upon Gods alone almightie power, if all meanes faile, nay, if the wisdom of men & Angells stand agast & amazed at this work,

V

then



then I must conclude it is the Lords worke, and it ought to be marvellous in our eyes. And from hence it is that it is a marvellous wonder that any creature that is under the power of sinne and Satan, it is a wonder it is a miracle that after all teaching, after all meanes used, any soule is humbled and prepared to receive mercy from the hand of the Lord Iesus Christ: Nay, hence it is that wee see little profit come from the worke of the Ministerie when wee see the greatnesse of this worke of conversion, wee may wonder how it cometh to passe that any are converted and brought home unto the Lord; the Ministers are faine to lift up their voyces like trumpets, and spend their hearts as it were, they pray againe, and fast againe, and preach againe, and yet all will not doe, for when is the heart of any humbled, when is the soule of any turned and converted unto God, and therefore away with that cursed delusion that harbours in the minds of many men, they will repent, and they will beleeve when they list, why? Alas it is not in your power, it is the almighty worke of God, thou hast not the worke of repentance to command at thy pleasure; it is not talking and saying, I doe repent with all my heart, and doe beleeve that will serve the turne, this will not doe, the Lord must worke effectually in thy soule by his almighty power, or else the union that is betwene sinne and thy soule will not be dissolved, or else the strength of sinne and power of Satan that is in thy soule will never be vanquished, or else the resistance that is in thy

thy soule, and which cometh from this strength against the blow of the Spirit, and all means that may fit it, and prepare it for to receive the Lord Jesus, and mercy from him will never be removed, a man shall sometimes find that the indisposition of his soule to any good shall be a little abated by the power of the Word, the edge of it will a little be blunted, but a poore soule cannot be freed altogether from this, untill it shall please the Lord by his almightie hand to remove it: and therefore in the first of James the 18. Verse, the text saith, *of his own will begat he us by the Word of truth, that wee should be as the first fruits of his creatures,* and Ioh. 1. 13. *To them that received him, saith the Text, he gave power to be the sonnes of God to them which believe in his name, which are borne not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God.* And therefore thinke of it Ministers that teach the Word, and people that heare the Word; wee must know, that unlesse the Lord steppeth in and doth the worke for us, all our labour is lost; it must be I say the Lord that must take away the stony heart, and it must be hee that must give the heart of flesh; it is not talking and making a profession that can plucke sinne out of the soule of a man in this kinde, but it must be the almighty power of the Lord that must doe it.

1am. 1. 18.

Ioh. 1. 13.

The second Vse is a ground of comfort, whereby the soule of poore sinners may be supported, and the hearts of those that have sinne hanging about them may be cheered when the soule consid-



ders that it is laden with abundance of corruptions  
 and abominations, then it is quite discouraged, and  
 thinkes with all that it shall never be recovered;  
 why? though you be not able yet here is the com-  
 fort of a poore soule, the worke is the Lords, and  
 he whose worke it is, is able to bring it to passe,  
 what though thou beest weake, yet God is strong,  
 and therefore quiet thy soule and content thy heart,  
 a man may say, I have a hard heart from within, and  
 it will receive no good from without; the Word  
 prevailes not, the Sacraments have no power over  
 me, why, all the meanes and cost and charges that  
 God hath bestowed upon me is lost, and my heart  
 is not yet humbled, my corruptions are not yet  
 weakened: be yet comforted, though meanes can-  
 not doe it, which God useth at his pleasure; though  
 these cannot doe it, yet the Lord can doe it, there is  
 nothing hard or difficult to him that hath hardnesse  
 it selfe at command, hee is a God which hath all  
 things at command; hee can command the devill  
 himselfe, and therefore hee hath the hardnesse of  
 thy heart at command also; there is nothing hard to  
 him that hath hardnesse at his command; nay,  
 though all things be impossible to man, yet nothing  
 is impossible with God, God can doe what man nor  
 meanes cannot, the Lord hee sheweth mercy up-  
 on us, why? because wee will, no, because hee will;  
 and though we cannot cast away our sinnes, yet the  
 Lord will remove them. Oh, then saith the soule,  
 this is somewhat comfortable that the Lords mer-  
 cy depends not upon my will, but upon Gods will.

And

And I would tell you somewhat by experience in this kinde, for I knew one that was over whelmed with dispaire a whole yeare together, because hee thought hee had committed the sinne against the holy Ghost, and yet at last was comforted by this meanes, he resolved with himselfe, if my conversion were in my will onely, then I should be damned, but it is not because I will, but because God will doe good to my poore soule: aye but the soule will say, I confesse it is not in my will, but it is in Gods will that hee sheweth mercy, and this is some comfort yet, but oh my corruptions are old finnes of a long time, can those be pardoned, they are become as another nature in me; can those therefore be removed, yes, the Lord is able to remove those also, forsaith the Prophet, the Lord hath laid salvation upon the mightie, so that though thy corruptions be mightie and powerfull, yet there is a mighty God that is able to undoe that cursed combination that is betweene thy soule and thy corruptions, and therefore quiet thy selfe in the consideration hereof, and say, I must confesse, that I have many corruptions, but the mighty Lord of hosts hath promised that hee will take away my stony heart, and give me a heart of flesh, and hee is able to doe it also, be herein quieted and supported and looke up to heaven for comfort.

In the third place it is a word of exhortation to all those that are in the bond of iniquitie and under the power of Satan, to those which carry a stony heart



about them, it is a word of exhortation to these, see your own wants and be exhorted in the name of the Lord Iesus, to have recourse to this great God, and intreate him to take away your stony heart from you: looke as it is with men if there be a Physition of excellent skill that cures all diseases that are brought unto him; why then all men will repaire to him; why, so it is here, God alone is able to doe this cure for us, and therefore he should have our custome; if a man should set up a bill upon the market post, that he would cure all that come to him which were troubled with the stone in the reins, or any other grievous disease, and if wee should meete with many comming from him that were healed by him, why then wee would be ready to say, such a one went and hee was healed, such a one went and hee was cured, and this will stirre up all to repaire unto him, and every one would bring those that appertaine unto them, and were troubled with this disease unto him, that they might be cured by him: the Lord hath set up a bill this day, that he will cure all those that come unto him of their stony heart, and all the Sonnes of God have found prooffe hereof to the comfort of their owne soules; the Lord is hee that will doe this, hee will take away your stony heart: you wives therefore that have husbands which have stony hearts; and you parents that have children that are troubled with stony hearts, goe home with comfort, and tell them that you have heard this day of a Physitian that will undertake to cure them of this disease, and  
exhort

exhort them therefore to repaire unto him: Our Saviour Christ when hee had healed many of their diseases, the Text saith in the third of Matthew, *That all came unto him and brought their sick that hee might heale them.* In the bowells of the Lord Iesus, beintreated you that have stony hearts to goe unto the Lord, that so you may be cured: you were better have a milstone about your neckes, then have this stony heart; we have all of us this stony heart more or lesse: as it is with a man that hath beene cured of a disease, perhaps the disease is much mitigated, but there will still be much weakenes and some reliques of the disease remaining in him a long time after. So the Sonnes of God have the strength of this stony heart somewhat lessened and abated in them, but they are not altogether freed from it; but those that were never cured of this disease, those that never had this stony heart in any measure removed, they were better have a milstone about their neckes, for it will sinke them into the bottomlesse pit of hell and destruction, if death take them away while they carrie this stony heart about them: they will be surely damned; therefore let them as they love their owne soules be exhorted and perswaded to come to this Physician: God saith, *I will take away your stony hearts, and I will give you hearts of flesh;* come therefore and yeeld yourselves to the battimen of God: then your stony hearts may be taken away: when you heare the Ministers teach, then say Lord, I beseech thee teach thou mee in the meantime; when the Mini-



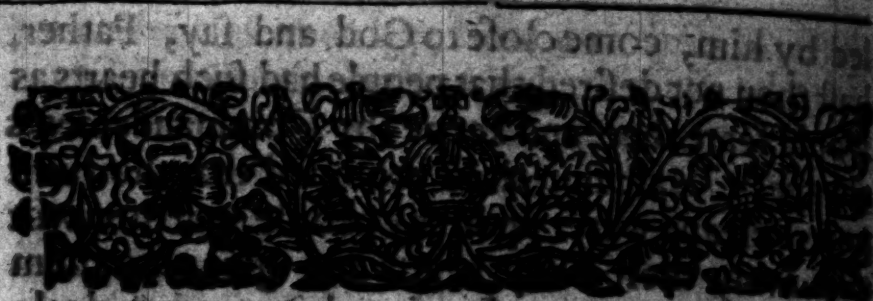
Her perswades, then say, Lord doe thou over-rule  
 and perswade this sinnefull heart of mine, take thee  
 away this power of corruptions which is in my  
 heart, and remove thou the rebellions of my heart,  
 goe home and be exhorted to goe to this Physician,  
 and importune the Lord in this case, put him in  
 minde of all those many favours, which he hath  
 vouchsafed to you, put the Lord in remembrance  
 of that which he hath desired in his Word: *Oh that  
 people had such hearts as would feare me and keepe my  
 Commandements alwayes:* say unto the Lord, that it  
 is as easie for him to create such hearts in you, as to  
 wish you had such hearts; put the Lord in minde of  
 his promise, and tell him that hee hath promised  
 that hee will take away their rebellions from his  
 people, and that he will give them a new heart, and  
 renew a right spirit within them, and hee will cause  
 them to walke in his wayes, and intreate him for  
 the Lord Iesus Christs sake to make good this pro-  
 mise unto you; intreate the Lord to consider what  
 a deale of honour shall redound unto his name, if he  
 shall cure your poore soules, downe upon your  
 knees, and pray to God that he would heale you of  
 this disease, and say unto him that thou hast heard  
 he is a mercifull God, and that hee will take away  
 the stony heart from his people, and beseech him  
 for his mercy sake, that hee would take away thy  
 stony heart, nay, tell him, that if hee will cure thee  
 thou wilt helpe him to a great many patients; tell  
 him that thou wilt tell thy neighbours of it, and ex-  
 hort them to come unto him that they may be hea-  
 led

led by him, come close to God and say, Father, hast thou not desired that people had such hearts as would feare thee, and keepe thy Commandements alwayes? Hast not thou promised that thou wilt powre cleane water upon thy people, and thou wilt take away their stony hearts and give unto them fleshy hearts? Say, Lord, what a great deale of honour thou shalt have hereby, I will exhort all that have stony hearts, to goe unto thee that they may be cured, and therefore for thy promise sake, and for the honour of thy names sake, I beseech thee to take away my stony heart, and give me a heart of flesh. Doe thus and you shall finde a great deale of comfort to your poore soules thereby.



of preparation we have had  
of the five speciall circumstances  
thereof, the first whereof was  
this, the mercy of God is free;  
secondly, a man must will to receive Christ and  
grace before he shall have Christ and grace; thirdly,  
he that doth will Christ truly shall have Christ  
and salvation by him. These three we have hand-  
led out of the 17. of the Revelation the 17. The  
fourth was that a man by nature cannot receive  
Christ and grace, and that we handled out of  
1 Cor. 2. 14. The fifth was, howsoever a soule by na-  
ture cannot receive Christ and salvation, yet God  
will draw the soules of his to prize Christ, and  
will draw them, and bee willing to give them  
and then he will bestow Christ and salvation upon  
them, this we handled out of 1. 1. 10. and in  
the





of honour thou shalt have. I will ex-  
 alt thee above all that have honour, to goe into thee that  
 I have chosen. **Lev. 19. 42.** I will ex-  
 alt thee above all that have honour, to goe into thee that  
 I have chosen. **Lev. 19. 42.** I will ex-  
 alt thee above all that have honour, to goe into thee that  
 I have chosen. **Lev. 19. 42.** I will ex-



According to our purpose we have  
 proceeded thus farre in the point  
 of preparation, wee have spoken  
 of the five generall circumstances  
 thereof; the first whereof was  
 this, the mercy of God is free;  
 secondly, a man must will to receive Christ and  
 grace before he shall have Christ and grace; third-  
 ly, he that doth will Christ truly shall have Christ  
 and salvation by him. These three wee have hand-  
 led out of the 22. of the *Revelations* the 17. The  
 fourth was that a man by nature cannot receive  
 Christ and grace, and that wee handled out of  
 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. The fift was, howsoever a soule by na-  
 ture cannot receive Christ and salvation, yet God  
 will bring the soules of his to prize Christ, and ap-  
 prove of him, and bee willing to entertaine him,  
 and then he will bestow Christ and salvation upon  
 them, this wee handled out of *Ezek.* 11. 19. and in  
 this

this worke of God in the preparing of a soule for himselfe; there are two further circumstances to be considered in regard of the time when God will doe this, and the first circumstance is in regard of the meanes, the second in regard of the men which are to bee wrought upon; and so wee have a trouble consideration in regard of the time when God will thus prepare the soule of a poore sinner for himselfe; the first is in respect of the meanes; and that is this, when the Gospel of life and salvation is sent and revealed to a people and continued to a people; if ever God worke upon the hearts of men, if ever hee meanes to bring people to the knowledge of the things belonging to their peace, it is then when the Lord is pleased to send his faithfull Ministers among them, & discover the meanes of life and salvation unto them. The second circumstance is in regard of the men that God will work upon; some sooner some later, some in their young and tender age, some in their middle age and in their ripe yeares, and some though very few in their old age, few are called when they are old; God calls some such but very few, as wee shall heare hereafter. Wee will handle now the circumstance of time in regard of the meanes, when God doth purpose good unto a man, or to a towne, or a country, or a kingdome, namely when the Lord sends his Gospel among them, & his faithfull Ministers to discover the meanes of salvation unto them; and for this purpose I have this choise Text, And first to make way for our selves and then



to presse on unto the point, we must therefore understand that our Saviour Christ came in the last day of asking, as it were, to *Ierusalem*, they had had many Priests to teach them, and many Prophets to exhort them, and a great many of means of life and salvation vouchsafed unto them; now when Christ was comming towards the city and *salvata* far off, and foresaw also the desolation that should come upon it, his bowells yearned within him towards the people, and he mourned secretly within himself, Oh these famous monuments and goodly buildings shall all be layd waste, thou hast had many Priests to advise thee, and many Prophets to instruct thee in the wayes of life, but now those dayes are gone and past: Nay the great Prophet of the world Christ Iesus is now come to wee thee to receive the things belonging to thy peace, and yet thy heart is hardened, and thou wilt not receive the things belonging to thy peace, and therefore now I will turne my preaching into mourning and fighting: Oh *Ierusalem, Ierusa'em*, that thou hadst known at least in this thy day the things belonging to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes, now those golden dayes are gone, and the gate of mercy is shut, there is no more meanes of grace and salvation offered, the Gospell shall never more be vouchsafed unto thee, and because thou hast rejected the meanes of salvation offered, they shall never more be granted: so that now here we have the passing peale of *Ierusalem* by our Saviour, look as it is with a man that is carrying to be buried, his wife

wife shee weepes, and his children they mourne, and his friends they lament. So it is here, our Saviour he followes *Ierusalem* to the grave as it were, and when hee could doe no more for it, then hee weepes and mournes over it, *Oh that thou hadst knowne in this thy day the things belonging to thy peace*; and the exhortation that here Christ presseth upon *Ierusalem*, depends upon three circumstances; the first is taken from the nature of the things offered her and revealed unto her, they were not matters of trifles, but they were things belonging to her peace, the second is in regard of the time, at least in this thy day, as who should say, this is the last day of asking, the last time that ever these things shall bee offered unto thee, and therefore this ought to move thee to give entertainement to the exhortation of thy Saviour. The third is in regard of the person, Christ Iesus requested this that might have commanded it, he intreats and requests it, nay with weeping, he doth beseech thee to give way to this exhortation of his; all meanes should have beene embraced, all opportunities should have beene entertained, all Ministers should have beene heard and regarded, but principally these things belonging to thy peace, especially in this thy day ought not to have beene rejected, thy Saviour above all other should not have beene refused and concerned; and then hee falls aweeping and then hee mournes, *Oh that thou hadst knowne these things in this thy day*, and then his heart even breaks, and hee weepes againe, *Oh but now they bee hidden*



from thine eyes, thou shalt never receive the like  
 favour againe, the like opportunitie shall never  
 hereafter bee offered. Wee will first handle the  
 fir circumstance, but before I can come to deliver  
 the point plainly and nakedly, give mee leave a  
 little to open the meaning of this word *day*, know  
 therefore thus much, that this word in phrase of  
 Scripture discovereth unto us that time, or that  
 percell of time which God hath set out in his pro-  
 vidence for any particular service. As it was in the  
 creation of the world when the Lord made all  
 things, the Lord turned an houre glasse as it were,  
 and set downe the time wherein every thing was  
 made, God said, *let there bee light and there was  
 light, and the evening and the morning was the  
 first day*, then God said, *let there be a firmament and  
 there was so, and the evening and the morning were  
 the second day*; and here is the stoppe and stay that  
 God maketh to the creature, as who should say,  
 as every thing hath a day wherein it was made,  
 so every thing hath a day wherein it workes, and  
 the Lord hath limited a certaine time to every acti-  
 on, that every creature is able to performe and  
 which God requires of it, so that observe a mans  
 day in generall, is nothing but the time of his life, &  
 besides this, a day discovereth the passages of Gods  
 providence and that speciall nicke of opportuni-  
 tie that God hath layd out for every particular act,  
 as God hath appointed a day wherein anguish and  
 griefe shall come upon us, and that is sayd to bee  
 the day of trouble, *call upon me in the day of trouble*  
 and we will seeke thee, O Lord, when thou shalt be  
 called, and we will be saved.

and I will deliver you saith the Psalmist; there is a day of tryall also in the third of Hebr. 8. *harden not your hearts as in the day of tryall or temptation in the Wildernesse,* and there is a day of visitation also, as wee may see in this Chapter, verse 44. *They shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewst not the day of thy visitation;* *Ierusalem* was like a sicke person, as indeede all sinners are sicke men; now the Lord Iesus being the great Physition of the world, came to visit *Ierusalem*. When he sent his balm from *Gilead*, the glad tidings of grace and salvation, then the Lord did visit *Ierusalem* for the healing, comforting and saving of her, and this was *Ierusalem* day: So that then the day of a man is the time of his life, together with that parcell of time that God hath allotted him for every particular worke; and the day of a man which belongs to his visitation, is that particular opportunitie wherein grace is offered, and salvation tendered unto him; as there is a day of trouble and a day of tryall, so in the third place there is a day of salvation and a day of visitation, which is that particular season wherein God sends his faithfull messengers to dispense the meanes of life and salvation unto a people. *O that you hadst knowne,* &c. as if Christ should have said, *O yee inhabitants of Ierusalem,* while the word of life lasteth, and the meanes of grace and salvation is continued unto you, this is your day, and this is the meaning of the word, every man hath his day more



more or lesse as *Jerusalem* had when the meanes of  
salvation were discovered unto it. The doctrine  
with which we will grapple is thus much, namely  
That while life is continued, & the meanes of grace  
& salvation afforded to a people, that is the season  
wherein God meaneth to worke upon their hearts  
effectually that they may receive life and salva-  
tion. It is true when Corne sailes God can send  
*Manna* from heaven; God can use extraordinary  
meanes to bring men to life and salvation and hap-  
pinesse, but men must not looke now for ex-  
traordinary conversions, they must not expect  
to be miraculously saved, as in former times some  
were, when the meanes of salvation was reve-  
led onely to the people of the Iewes; *Rahab* in-  
deede and *Iob* that had not the meanes of salva-  
tion so apparently revealed unto them, but had  
onely an inckling of the happinesse that God had  
wrought for his people; this wrought upon them  
and prevailed with their hearts, and by the power  
of the Almighty God brought them to the know-  
ledge of the things belonging to salvation. But in  
the common course of God, if ever soule now be  
converted, it must be by the ministry of the word,  
that is our day, that is our time, that is the speciall  
season wherein God will vouchsafe to looke upon  
poore sinners, and convert them unto himselfe; if  
a man were not alive meanes would not profit him,  
and if a man were alive and had no meanes, hee  
could get no good neither; but when both these  
goe together, then is the time wherein God offereth

reth life and salvation, then is the season wherein God (if ever) will worke upon the soule of a sinner to make him fit to entertaine things belonging to his peace. We must handle two parts in the point; first that a mans life is part of this season; secondly that the meanes offered in that season is the making up of the point, wee will prove both parts severally, and then make uses of them both together. First wee will proove that the time of a mans life is part of the season wherein God will worke effectually upon him for his everlasting comfort, in the ninth of Ecclesiastes 10. there saith the wiseman, *Eccles. 9. 10.* *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to doe, doe it with thy might, for there is no worke, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest;* as though he had sayd; if there be any thing that God requireth of thee, If there be any duty that ought to be discharged by the labour whilst thou livest to doe it. And now be carefull to performe it, for when death shall close thine eyes, and thy body returneth to the grave, then there is no more teaching, no more bearing, no more expecting of grace and mercy from God, and wee shall finde in course of Scripture, that a man shall receive according to that he hath done in the flesh: while a man lives here he is in the time of trading, and the time after this life is the time of enjoying, in this life is the time of labouring, and the time to come is the time of rewarding; as our trading and labouring is here in this life, so shall our enjoying and rewarding be hereafter in the life to come, *As a man soweth*



Gal. 6. 2.

*seeth so shall a man reape, Gal. 6. 8.* if hee sow to the flesh he shall reape to the flesh, if hee yeeld to the corruptions of his owne nature, and gives way thereunto, and be carried asidethereby, hee shall have the wages of sinne, but hee that is willing for to stoope to the Commandements of God, he that serves God here and walkes uprightly before him shall receive everlasting life, and eternall happinesse hereafter; and so much for the proove of the first Point, after this life is once ended, there is no hope of life and salvation.

2 Cor. 6. 2.

Secondly, together with our lives wee must also have the meanes of grace continued unto us for the making up of that season wherein God will, if ever, fit us and prepare us for mercy, I meane by the meanes of grace the preaching of the Gospell, for this was one part of *Jerusalem's* day here spoken of; and therefore this is the second part of every mans day, namely, when we have the glad tidings of the Gospell vouchsafed unto us; in 2. Cor. 6. 2. the Apostle doth conclude that when the meanes of life and salvation is afforded, *this is the time of salvation*, he laith his finger, as it were, upon the season of life and happinesse, for he saith, *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee.* now some may say, when is this time of salvation? The Apostle doth particularly make this good in the words following, *now* saith hee, *behold is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation.* Now while the Lord is pleased to vouchsafe the meanes of grace and salvation to you,

you, and to send the Doctrine of salvation among you; why, now is the time accepted, now is the day of your salvation, and therefore *Luke 19. 9.* *Luke 19. 9.*

*Zachew* when hee had a strong desire to see Christ, and to meete with the Lord Iesus, and could not by reason of the prease, hee gets him out of the croud, and came before into a Sycamore tree, that so hee might the better behold him; but before *Zachew* could see Christ, Christ saw him, and calleth to him, *Make haste Zachew and come downe, for to day I must abide at thy house, and Zachew made haste and came downe joyfully;* and then the Lord Iesus when hee came with him to his house said unto him, *this day is salvation come unto this house, why? because this day hee was made the sonne of Abraham,* as wee may see in the words following, this day it pleased Christ to bring that desire of *Zachew* unto some perfection; & this was the day of *Zachew*: while then the Word is revealed, and while the meanes of happinesse is laid open, while God makes a tender of grace and salvation to a soule, this is the day of every mans salvation: so then wee have the prooffe of the point plaine out of Scripture, namely, that while life and the meanes last, that is the season that God hath appointed and set apart to doe good to the soules of those whom hee meaneth to convert unto himselfe.

The next thing to be considered is the reason of this how it commeth to be thus, that the time of a mans life, and the time wherein God vouchsafeth the meanes, that this is the time wherein God offereth



Heb. 9. 27.

reth salvation to a poore soule; and wee will lay  
 downe the reasons of both parts severally. First,  
 concerning the time of a mans life; and the reason of  
 this is, because when this crazie frame of ours be-  
 ginneth to be dissolved, then comes Gods definitive  
 sentence, Gods definitive verdict then passes upon  
 a man, God then passeth a sentence upon a man  
 which hee never meaneth to recall; a man at the  
 time of his death, when death closeth a mans eyes,  
 hee is then either everlastingly happy, or else ever-  
 lastingly miserable; there is then afterwards no al-  
 teration to be expected, *Heb. 9. 27.* There, saith the  
 Text, *it is appointed for all men once to die, but after  
 that comes judgement;* as death leaves a man, so  
 judgement findes a man, hee doth not say after  
 death comes amendment, after death comes repen-  
 tance, after death comes Purgatory; no, no, this is  
 a dreame of the Papists, they thinke that a man  
 may after death be in trouble a while, and be in  
 Purgatorie, and then be brought out by the treasure  
 of the Church: but alas, this is a vaine dreame to  
 enlarge the Popes coffers, and to make the Popes  
 Kitchin hot, as Divines use to say, that so the Pope  
 may have a great deale of money: they say, if a man  
 have led never so wicked a life, if yet he will bestow  
 such a legacie upon the Popes holinesse, though hee  
 have beene in Purgatory a great while, hee shall  
 yet by the treasure of the Church be released, but  
 this is a fond, foolish, sottish dreame, the case is  
 plaine enough after death judgement comes next, a  
 man shall either goe into everlasting happinesse, or  
 else

else into everlasting confusion; there is no third place for a soule to goe unto, but a man must either goe to hell for ever or to heaven for ever; every man that is saved, is saved by Christ, *Ioh. 3. 36.* He *Ioh. 3. 36.* that beleeueth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that beleeueth not the Sonne shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him; so then now if a man beleeve in Christ hee is perfectly saved, if he beleeve not in Christ hee is perfectly damned, *Ioh. 3. 18.* *Ioh. 3. 18.* Hee that beleeueth on him is not condemned, but hee that beleeueth not is condemned already; that is, hee hath one foote in hell as it were, hee is now in the gall of bitternesse, and if hee liueth thus, and endeth his dayes in this condition, hee shall as surely be damned and goe to hell, as if hee were there already. All that beleeve in Christ are fully saved, and therefore to heaven they must goe, and if they beleeve not in Christ, they are as surely damned and therefore to hell they must goe; so then the case is cleare, the sentence of God is firme, and the verdict that God passeth upon a poore sinner at the time of death is most certaine, there is no repealing of the sentence, there is no recalling of the verdict, and this is the reason why the time of a mans life is the season wherein a man shall receive grace and saluation if ever hee receive it.

The second thing to be prooved is this, why the meanes of saluation makes up the opportunitie wherein God meaneth to save poore sinners if ever they be converted, and wee shall observe that the

ground



ground of this lieth in the very nature of a season; if wee aske what makes a season of grace? I answer that it will appeare that only the revelation of the Will of God in the Gospell maketh this season. Know therefore thus much, that to make up the season for any thing; there is not onely required a continuance of time, but also a supply of all those helpes that may be usefull and needefull for the accomplishment of any worke in that season; As for example, imagine the dayes and the nights were of an equal length, so many houres in the one, so many houres in the other, yet this continuance of time doth not make an opportunite barely; for a man to walke in the night though there be as many houres in the night as in the day, because the houres doe not make an opportunite for a man to walke in, but the means that are needefull for this action, for when the Sunne shines so that a man may see his way, and avoid dangers and inconveniences, this is the time wherein a man hath a fit opportunite to walke in, so saith our Saviour, *If a man walkes in the night he stumbls, but if he walke in the day then he stumbls not, because he seeth where he goeth*; so that the continuance of time doth not make up an opportunite, but a supply also of all helpes and sufficiencie needefull for the performance of any action in this time. Looke as it is with men when they goe to faile, when there is winde and tide for their purpose, this is the fittest opportunite for them to take shippe in: now in a calme day there may be as many houres, as much  
 continu-

continuance of time as in a day when there is winde and tide serving for their turne; but this cannot be said to be a season for them to goe to sea in, but when they have winde and weather to carry them, and tide to convey them, this is a fit opportunitie for them to take ship in: so when the Gospell is revealed, when the meanes of grace is offered to any people, then there is a powerfull concurrence of all sufficiency and helpe every way to procure that good which is wanting to the soule, and which is necessary for the soule for the attaining of happinesse here and hereafter; and therefore this is the season wherein men shall be converted and receive salvation if ever they shall be made partakers of it; and therefore it is said of the Word, that it is able to save the soules of men, though a man were never so weak, yet this Word of the Gospell is able to make him strong, though he were never so proud, never so sturdie, yet this word is able to humble him, though he were never so full of unbeliefe, yet this Word is able to worke faith in him, though hee were a damned man, yet thus is the onely meanes to bring him to salvation. Now then this I reason out of the former arguments, they that enjoy that continuance of time wherein they have all meanes necessary to procure life and salvation; they have the season wherein life and salvation is to be obtained; but they that have life continued and the meanes of the Gospell revealed and vouchsafed unto them, they have all meanes and helpes whereby grace and salvation may be procured unto them, and therefore they



they enjoy the fittest season wherein God doth  
 mean to do good unto their soules. The life of the  
 Doctrine is behind, that lieth in the application of  
 the Point. The uses of the Point are three, If it be so that  
 while life is continued, and the Gospell preached,  
 this is the time wherein God meanes if ever to shew  
 mercy to the soule of a poore sinner: then in the  
 first place, it is a ground of instruction to every  
 soule here present, to teach us how thankfull wee  
 ought to be unto the Lord that enjoy yet these li-  
 berties in the land of the living, to acknowledge  
 Gods goodnesse towards us, and take notice of his  
 mercifull dealing with us, that yet we live thorough  
 him, and that yet wee may receive grace and mer-  
 cie from him by the meanes of salvation that hee  
 hath appointed: it is a mervellous high and happy  
 priviledge that wee may enjoy the light of the  
 Gospell, that a man was borne in such a time, in the  
 last age of the world, in such a place, in this king-  
 dome, wherein the way of life and salvation is so  
 fully, so plainly, nay, so powerfully made knowne  
 to the soules of men, as the whole world enjoyes  
 not the like, that we have the day of salvation to  
 trade in for the good and comfort of our soules,  
 that wee have the day before us wherein wee may  
 walke in those wayes whereby comfort may be  
 derived unto us, that the Sunne of the Gospell  
 shines full in our faces, and is not yet set, and that as  
 wee live in the earth, so we enjoy the meanes of a  
 better life, that so wee may be with God, when  
 wee

wee shall goe hence and be no more seene. The  
 antient people of God did observe Gods goodnesse  
 herein, the Scripture saith, that *Abraham* saw this  
 day a farre off and rejoyced, he saw the day where-  
 in Christ should come into the world, and when  
 the meanes of salvation should be offered and re-  
 vealed, those things were laced up in types & figures  
 in *Abrahams* time, but when God revealed the day  
 of Christ Iesus unto *Abraham*, hee by faith be-  
 lieved it, hee saw it a farre off and rejoyced: nay,  
 good old *Simeon* when hee saw this accomplished  
 when he saw Christ was borne, and had him in his  
 armes, then he desired to live no longer, but blessed  
 God and said, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in  
 peace according to thy Word, for mine eyes have seene  
 thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face  
 of all people, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and  
 the glory of thy people Israel;* when he saw the meanes  
 of salvation discovered and declared, his heart was  
 so ravished with the delight he tooke therein, that  
 he did desire to depart out of this life, that he might  
 be with Christ in a better life: it is true that while  
 we live in this world we shall have many troubles,  
 while we continue in this vale of misery, wee shall  
 have many vexations, but this is the comfort of a  
 man that hee hath the voice of the Gospell soun-  
 ding in the eares of him, and the Spirit behind him  
 crying after him, This is the good and ancient way  
 walke in it; if a man that were to travell by night  
 had but the Moone, or the light of the Starres to  
 direct him in his journey, this would be very  
 com-



comfortable unto him, but if hee had a lampe or a torch carried before him hee would thinke this a marvellous comfort, but if a man that hath a journey to take, hath the Sunne shining cleare above him, this will greatly cheare the heart of a poore traveller, though his journey be tedious, and the way be foule; why yet hee will say it is faire above head, and I have day enough before mee, and therefore I care not: So it ought to be with every Christian man living; wee are all travellers here below, wee are all bound for heaven, though a man finde rough wayes and cold weather, though a man have many troubles, many disgraces cast upon his person, many reproches put upon his name, yet this may be his comfort there is day enough before a man, it is faire weather above head, the preaching of the Word may cheere a man, and the meanes of life and happinesse may comfort a man that walkes in the way unto salvation; in 1 Pet. 1. 10. the Text saith, that the antient Prophets enquired and sought diligently when Christ should come, when the means of salvation should be revealed, of which salvation, saith the text, *the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come,* &c. all the antient Fathers before enjoyed onely the Mooneshine and the Starre-light of the Gospell, and therefore in the 2 Pet. 1. 19. The Apostle saith, *We have also a more sure Word of prophesie, whereunto you doe well that you take heed as unto a light that shineth in a darke place untill the day dawne and the day-starre arise in your hearts;*

1 Pet. 1. 10.

2 Pet. 1. 19.

as who should say, when Christ came, when the Gospell was revealed, the Sonne of righteousness did then clearely appeare, if they that expected those things onely were thankfull for them, then what should we be that enjoy these helps, for the cheering of us, helping of us, and comforting of us in the wayes of salvation; it is a speech of the Prophet *David*, *Give me understanding that I may live*: it is an observation of holy men out of this place, that a man doth not live because he groweth, a tree doth so, a man doth not live because hee sees and sees and heares, and hath the sensible facultie, the beasts doe so, a man doth not live because hee reasons, the devills doe so; *but give mee understanding that I may live*: wee live not as holy men unless we understand the wayes of God, unless wee know the things belonging to our peace, here and hereafter; we live not because we are wise, for the devill is wiser than any man living; *but give me understanding that I may live*, that I may understand the things of God; this is the wisdom of a Christian whereby hee shall come to eternall happinesse: many in the East part of the world worship the devill, they never so much as heard any thing of Christ Iesus, and the glad tidings of the Gospell, and therefore is it not a wonderfull miracle that God hath continued us unill this time, wherein the meanes of salvation are so fully revealed? You that are going on in the roade way to destruction, all you that are in a naturall estate, if God should plucke you out of the land of the living, what should become of your poore soules, it



is a great mercy that God doth yet vouchsafe life unto you, but that you may heare the Word, and enjoy the meanes of salvation, what a comfort is this: A Plowman if hee hath but a fit opportunitie of sowing, plowing, or reaping, hee is thankfull for it, and hee ought so to be, for it is a great goodnesse of God to afford unto him seasonable weather to sow and gather in the fruits of the earth; in the time here of late when by reason of unseasonablenesse of weather, famine was feared, and yet God gave a seasonable time afterwards to ripen & gather the fruits of the earth; I appeale to your owne consciences did not this comfort you, did not this cheare you? Nay, could not people come and be thankfull to God for such blessings, and say it was a good season God be blessed, Gods name be praised for it? Was this such a goodly season wherein you might fill your barnes full of corne, and your purses full of money? Why then, had we eyes to see and hearts to conceive what is that season, that blessed season of salvation, those good dayes that have passed over our heads, wherein many have injoyed the opportunitie and meanes of salvation twentie, thirtie, yea fortie yeares; Oh blessed season, the Sunne never saw the like, nay the whole world wonders at this marvellous mercy that the Lord hath vouchsafed to us in this Land. Shall we enjoy all these blessings, and yet not be thankfull for them, and prise them as we ought, and walke worthy of them as we might; Oh let it not be so with us, but you that can be thankfull for a plentiful harvest.

harvest when you may gather money into your coffers; oh be thankfull, be thankfull for the meanes of salvation vouchsafed unto you whereby you may fill your soules full of comfort; and therefore goe your wayes in secret, and be thankfull to God that you live, and if you have received grace, blesse God that ever you saw that day, if you have not received grace, yet blesse God that yet you breathe, and that you may seeke unto him and waite upon him in the use of the meanes, that so you may receive mercy and salvation from him: blesse God that thou hast the Sunne shine of the Gospell shining in thy face, that thou hast the day before thee that thou mayst trade therein and receive comfort thereby.

Secondly, is it so that while life lasts, and the meanes of salvation is continued and vouchsafed unto us, that this is our day, that this is the season wherein God will shew mercy unto us; what use then will you make of this, for the present, what will you say, and what will you now perswade your hearts unto, why, me thinkes every man answers, and every mans soule ecchoeth againe, surely if this be the time, if this be the season, let us take it then, since the Lord offereth this, and continueth this, we ought then to be intreated in the name of the Lord Iesus to take this opportunitie, and not omit any season wherein the Lord calleth upon us; that so wee may obtaine the end of our hopes, the desire of our soules, even salvation hereafter. *Reckeme the time because the dayes are evil,* saith the



Apostle, that is, because the time is now, therefore take the opportunitie; it is the use that the Apostle makes, *While ye have time doe good unto all men*, then much more to our soules; if we must doe good to our neighbours, then much more to that poore soule of ours that is miserably oppressed with sinne, that is in a damned and cursed estate. Oh but there are many arguments whereby Satan laboureth to defeat this truth, and many shittes the soule hath to put off this that hath beene spoken; give me leave a little to wipe away those carnall conceits and cavills. The first is this, the soule will be ready to say, I confesse it is true indeede, that when the opportunitie is we should take it, but that may be hereafter, who knoweth whither this be my time or no, my opportunitie or no? I answer with the Apostle Paul, while I am speaking, and you are hearing, while we are all living, now is the time. now is the season, it is in 1 Cor. 6. 2. the Text saith; *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee, behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.* Whilst Ministers are calling upon you, and you are living, though they cannot give you grace, nor you of your selves receive grace, yet wee have the promise in the accepted time God will heare us, even now while I am speaking and you are hearing, this the very day of salvation, and therefore let us not turne the deafe eare upon the Lord, but while opportunity is afforded, let us make use of it, while the Lord is pleased to continue opportunities

1 Cor. 6. 2.

unto

unto us, let us embrace them, hee that never heard,  
let him heare now, hee that never prayed, let him  
pray now, it is now high time to awake out of that  
curled securitie wherein wee have a long time llien,  
the Lord is come neare unto us even to the very  
next doore, Christ Iesus is calling, and mercie is  
intreating, and wisdom is even hoarse with cry-  
ing after us, there is nothing but a heart wanting,  
mercy is offered, we ought therefore to entertaine  
it, the meanes of salvation are revealed, therefore  
we ought for to embrace them, Cant. 2. 10. there  
saith the Text, *My beloved spake and said unto me,*  
*Rise up my love, my faire one and come away, for the*  
*winter is past, and the raine is over and gone, the flow-  
ers appeare on the earth, and the time of the singing of*  
*birds is come, and the voyce of the turtle is heard in our*  
*Land;* thus God speaketh to you this day, those  
words are made good to every soule that heareth  
me this day, God calleth to every poore sinner, the  
Church was then in misery, and so the Lord spea-  
keth to every poore soule, thou art in the grave of  
thy finnes, arise my love, my dove, the time of per-  
secution is past, and the voyce of the turtle is yet  
heard, the Ministers of God are preaching to us,  
and wooing of us, and saying, the Spring time of  
grace is now present. The Lord saith unto us as to  
the Church there, rise and come out of those sinne-  
full courses wherein you are, he pluckes the adul-  
terer out of his leud practises, and hee calls the  
proud man out of his wicked courses, and the cove-  
tous man out of his counting house, and from the

Cant. 2. 10.



→ Ezek. 12.3.

things here below and bids them come unto the house of the Lord, that he may speake comfort and consolation to their soules, the Lord doth even strive with us, and labours every way to plucke us out of our base and sinnefull courses, the Lord dealeth with us, as he did with Israel, Ezek. 12.3. there saith the Text, *Prepare thou sonne of man thee suffice for removing, and remove by day in their sight, and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place, it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious people,* as it hee had laid, it may be when all these meanes are used, it may be at last they will be perswaded and performe that which I require of them, it is a lively patterne of Gods speciall providence over us in this Land, God hath not dealt thus with other Nations, hee hath passed by other people, and hath let the Gospell abide among us, the sound of the Gospell, an inkeling of it hath bene in other countries, but hee hath commanded the Gospell to abide with us twentie, thirtie, fortie, fixtie yeares, wee have yet the Gospell among us, we are yet in peace and prosperitie, we enjoy those liberties that thousands of our poore bretheren want and would attaine unto: many have had some meanes, but wee have had all meanes, we have had famine for to affright us, the Plague to awaken us, and peace to cheere us, nay the Gospell and meanes of salvation are still continued to us, the Lord saith, *preach still, continue still calling, and still crying to the people of England,* that so if it be possible their proud hearts may be humbled, their sturdy hearts may be softned, their unregenerate hearts may be converted and their soules may be saved. The

The second cavill is this, the soule may say though the opportunity be now present, yet there is time enough, the day is long enough; for the answer hereof I will goe no further then the Text saith, *O that thou hadst knowne the things belonging to thy peace in this thy day, but now they are hidden from thine eyes.* The day of a mans life is very uncertaine, no man knoweth how long he shall live, who knoweth not what our lives are, bubbles, and vapours and flowers, how soone are the bubbles downe, how soone are the vapours vanisht, how soone doe the flowers fade, nay many of us are in our middle age, nay some of us are in our old age, wee have one foote already in the grave, and how soone may these flowers wither, how soone may these men returne unto the earth, and then what will become of all their expectations. It is good saith the wise man to injoy the present time while life and strength continue; young men will bee ready to say, I will take my owne content now, and hereafter I will returne unto the Lord, I will gather the flower while it is Greene and while I am young, I will not spend my dayes in mourning, I will not breake my heart with sighing and sorrowing for my finnes, but when I grow crooked and aged, and sit at home, then I will repent and turne unto the Lord and become a new man; these young men say unto repentance as *False* did to *Paul*, go thy wayes now, I will heare thee another time, so say they to repentance, hereafter when there comes a convenient time I will repent, I will



be holy and obedient, and turne over a new leafe, and become a new man; but now let me make use of the treasure of my youth, and because I am in the strength of my yeares, therefore I will follow my pleasures; O foole, O foole, I say unto thee as Christ did to the rich man in the Gospell, this night thy soule may be taken from thee, and then what will become of thy thoughts, plots, and projects, thy bed may become thy grave, and then what will become of thy poore soule, the divells may drag it into hell. It was the word of the rich man when he had filled his barnes full of goods, and his purse full of money, then he saith unto his soule, Soule take thy rest, thou hast goods layd up for many yeares; take thy cups saith the drunkard, take thy whore saith the adulterer. Oh foole this night the divell may hale thy soule into everlasting confusion, how knowest thou but that sentence may bee given upon thee which was given upon him, and then there will be no repentance in the grave. But bee it so that thy life may continue whil his very uncertaine, though thy day continue, yet the day of grace happily will not continue, that is but a minute of the particular time of thy day, if God take away the light of the Gospell, thou mayst die for hunger and thirst, and never come to the like mercies, never receive the like encouragements, thou that heretofore hast despised a faithful Minister, it may bee thou shalt never see the face of a good Minister more hereafter, and then what shall become of all thy faire hopes and good

ly expectations ; Oh then when the market is done thou wilt come too late to buy salvation, thou shalt never receive those benefits and meanes of grace and salvation againe which thou hast neglected. Nay consider that this which I have spoken may be the case of any one in this congregation, every man hath his day, I gave her a time to repent saith the Lord of wicked *Iesabel*, but shee would not, the Lord would have plucked her out of her bed of downe, and from the armes of her lovers into a bed of sorrow, shee hath now paine for her pleasure and sorrow for her jollitie, who knoweth but this may be my day and thy day, and every particular mans day. When the word of God comes home to the soule of a man, and the Lord is pleased to knocke at the conscience of a poore sinner, he may then breake out into admiration, and say, is it thus : is the Lord so compassionate that notwithstanding all my rebellions hee is still pleased to strive with mee, nay to mourne over me, as hee did over *Ierusalem*, *O that thou hadst knowne as least in this thy day the things belonging to thy peace*, many mercies hath the Lord let into my soule to allure me, many judgements to terrifie me, many promises to perswade me, and hath used all meanes possible to bring mee to a better life, no mercy equalls this, no goodnesse is to be compared with this, thus take notice of the mercies of God towards you, and go aside and make good use of those good motions that God by his Spirit shall suggest into your soules ; and if the Lord hath almost per-

2 Aa 2 swaded



swaded thee to be a Christian, oh then make much of those blessed motions, and beginne to be a new man presently! oh, goe home and say, if God doe thus strive and struggle with me in particular, then resolve and say this is my day, if there be any soule here present that it hath pleased God thus to move, oh know and consider that this is thy particular time, thy particular season, say and remember that such a time thou hadst a faire offer, it may be he that now moves and perswades thee, and intreats thee to come to everlasting life and happinesse, it may be hee will never looke after thee more. And now what remaineth more, when a man resolves that this is his day, and that now the Lord comes neare unto him, but even then presently to breake off all impediments, and leape over all blockes that lie in his way, and resolve thenceforward to bid adue to all his corruptions; hee should consider with himselfe and say, seeing the Lord doth even mourningly strive with me for my good, then I will never attend more to those lusts, I will never yeeld more to those occasions that have gotten the mastery over me, I would with every poore soule, to take up this resolution, to give a bill of divorcement to his finnes, and never to see the face of his corruptions any more; to doe this now will be a very hard thing, I know it, and experience proves it, your lusts will cleave to you and hang about you, you would be loath to part with your old corruptions, old friends that have beene of old acquaintance, for these to be shaken off on a sudden, this will be very grievous:

S. *Austin* speaking of his conversion confesseth this, his sinnes did hang about him, and he was loath to leave them, and forsake them, he was often perswaded by the motions of Gods Spirit to returne from his wicked courses, and become a new man, but hee was loath to part with his beloved lusts, and therefore thought hee might have time enough to repent afterwards, but at length hee tooke up this resolution to breake through all impediments, and brake out into those words, Why not to day Lord, why not to day, hee had dallied too often, and deferred too long, and therefore now hee resolved to goe thorough stich in this case, he resolved to doe so, and kept his resolution. Why do, you as he did, and say, why not to day Lord, why not to day, you could be content on your death beds to be drunke no more, why cannot you as well to day resolve to be sober; the adulterer when he lies upon his death bed wil not endure so much as to look up. on his Quene, why should hee not as well abstaine from this base sinne to day, wee know not whether the meanes may be taken from us, or wee from the meanes, and therefore when the Lord saith, *My face seeke you*, answer againe and say, *thy face Lord will we seeke.*

But there are yet some shifts still behind which must be answered; the heart will yet be ready further to reply, suppose God call and I refuse, may I not heare this call againe hereafter? I answer, take heede of that, for the text saith here, *they are now hiddden from thine eyes*, yee are not Authours and Patrons of this grace, yee are not givers of this



mercy, it is of Gods free love to offer mercy and salvation unto you, and therefore especially take heed of this conceit; he that offereth grace unto thee now, if thou refusest it, may chance never to give it thee hereafter, though thou greatly desirest it, and earnestly seekest after it; he that now holdeth out a golden Scepter to entertaine thee, may afterwards have an iron rod to breake thee in pieces if thou dost not accept his kinde offer and come in unto him, he that now doth perswade thee to receive mercy at his hands while hee offers it, that God hereafter may seale up thy heart in stupiditye and benumbednesse forever, If thou dost not embrace it; that Spirit which now strives with thee may never strive more, that Spirit may never worke upon thee more, and then when the gate is shut you may knocke till your heart ake, as the foolish Virgins did, and yet never get in, you may then howle, and crie, and call, and knocke, and yet with Esau you shall not obtaine a blessing, though you seeke it even with teares; but the Lord will answer, *Depart from mee ye workers of iniquitie, I know you not*; it will be just with God to take away those holy motions of his blessed Spirit which you have slighted, to take away that mercy which you have despised, take heede that doe not befall you which shall befall all despisers of grace and salvation, *Pro. 1. 24.* there saith the text, *Because I have called and ye have refused, because I stretched out my hand and none would regard, but ye have despised all my counsells, and ye would none of my correction: I will also*

*Pro. 1. 24.*

laugh at your destruction, and mocke when your feare  
commeth; when your feare commeth like sudden  
desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind. There  
was a time when the Lord called to all despisers  
of grace and refusers of mercie, how long and how  
often, but they that would not heare, the time will  
come, when the Lord will say, I will laugh at your  
destruction; when a poore sinnefull creature at  
the day of judgement shall come before the Lord  
of glory, the devill drawing him, and then the  
Lord shall laugh at him, and say, how often have I  
sent unto you, and called upon you, and you would  
not heare nor regard me? Behold men and Angels,  
this is the man, this is hee that contemned my  
Word, and slighted the meanes of salvation, and  
therefore laugh at him, mocke at his destruction:  
Oh what will become of that man then when the  
Lord of mercy shall not onely take mercy from  
him, when the God of goodnesse shall not onely  
take goodnesse from him, but shall laugh at his con-  
fusion, and shall rejoyce when hee executes his  
judgements upon this man to his everlasting de-  
struction; and therefore I beseech you take heede  
of this dangerous conceit.

The fourth shift is this, if all will not work upon the  
soule, then it falls upon this, is it so that grace and  
mercie being neglected they shall never be obtai-  
ned, why then it takes up this conclusion, if I never  
have grace and mercy, then I can live without it;  
oh foole if there were any creature of this disem-  
per in this congregation, I may speake terrible  
things.



things unto that soule, when a man is brought to this passe that he cares not what becomes of his soule, when hee sayes what matter is it if I have not grace, is this such a losse? When a soule is come to this, oh then he is in a miserable cōdition, in a woefull lamentable estate: is it no matter to be saved, is it no matter to be comforted, is it no matter to be glorified eternally, what matter is it to lose grace? Nay what availeth it to live frolickely here and miserably hereafter? What matter is it to neglect grace here, and to be deprived of glory hereafter, is this no matter? Let me say to you, as the man of God did to his servant, *2 King. 5. 26.* *Is this a time to take money and receive garments and olives, and vineyards and sheepe and oxen?* So say I, is this a time to live frolickely and merrily? Is this a time for a man to follow cursed companions, and embrace sinnefull corruptions, is this a time for a man to follow the world, and the vanities thereof, and in the meane time neglect the meanes of life and salvation? No, no, know it is the day of God, the day of grace, our soules lie at pawne, if these opportunities be omitted, woe and grieve and paine, and wormewood will be upon that man by whom they be neglected, he that despiseth these meanes here shall live miserably hereafter, everlasting happinessse and glory depends upon this opportunity: tell not me it is a day of marchandise, and you must provide for your familiēs, I tell you it is a day of salvation, hast thou time to provide for thy house and familie, and not for thy soule and for thy everlasting

*2 Kings 5. 26.*

lasting happinesse. So then gather up all briefly, and the scope will be this, it is now the most opportune time, and therefore the fittest, it is the day of salvation & therefore the shortest, it is the day of visitation and therefore the greatest commoditie, the opportunity is the fittest, the day is the shortest, the commoditie the greatest, and what remaineth now, but that the Lord will worke this upon your soules, that he which spake this to *Ierusalem* whilst he lived on earth, may speake the same to you though now in glory, and perswade your hearts to entertaine this opportunitie to make use of this day and embrace this commoditie.

But if all meanes will not perswade men hereto, then the last use is an use of exhortation unto us all, to pittie the case of such men, and to shew remorse for the desolation of those that neglect the meanes of their salvation. If wee cannot perswade you, yet give us leave to mourne for you, if our persuasions will not take place in your soules, yet I hope you will give us leave to goe in secret, and let our eyes droppe downe teares for the miserable desolation that will fall upon those that neglect the meanes of life and happinesse: you must not thinke to passe thorough Purgatory, you must not thinke to goe to heaven whither you will or no; me thinks I see a poore creature that slighted mercy & salvation when it was offered, unto him, me thinks I see that soule lying upon his death bed, light is departing from his eyes, & his soule is departing from his body, his body is a burthen to him in regard of his disease, and his conscience a hell unto him in regard



of his finnes, oh the name of a Minister, of a Church, they are all as bills of indictments coming against the soule of this man, me thinkes I heare such a man say at his last gaspe, the day is gone, the gate is shut, and now it is too late to enter; and thus the soule departs from the body, the body to the grave, and the soule to hell: Oh what bitter and wofull lamentations will that soule make when it comes in hell! Oh the golden time that I have scene and not regarded, oh the gracious opportunities of salvation that my eyes have beheld, and yet I neglected! Oh the mercy and grace and goodnesse of God that have been offered unto me, and I have contemned and trampled under my feet, and therefore now must be tormented with the devil & his angels from everlasting to everlasting, oh the Lord give us hearts to take notice of these things. If we cannot doe what good we would to men, yet let us lament their miserable conditions; wives mourne for your husbands, parents mourne for your children, and say the Lord hath offered the meanes of salvation both profitable and comfortable, yet my husband heares not, my child receives not these meanes, why then mourne and lament, oh my poore husband, oh my child, thou mightest have had grace, but now it is taken from thee, thou hadst the offer of salvation, and now perhaps it shall never again be tendered to thee; but if mercy cannot prevaile with you, nor the voyce of the Minister take place in you, yet let the fastie and comfort of your owne soules, move you to make much

much of the opportunities and meanes of grace and salvation. Let every master of a family go home and resolve and say, this is my day Lord, this very day may be my day, and thy day, the last day that ever I shall speak, the last day that you shall ever heare. If I were now breathing out my last breath, I would breath out this legacie to all Christians which I leave behinde me. This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation: He that hath an eare to heare, let him now heare, he that never had a heart, let him now have a heart to embrace these things, whilst grace and salvation is offered unto him, let him entertaine this offer. It doth mee good to consider if the soule of a man would but receive mercy and grace now while it is offered him this day, what comfort he may have for ever, both here and hereafter, he might then say, this day I received comfort, I was never humbled before, but this day I was humbled, I could never before receive any mercy, but this day I received it, this was a good day to me. Oh if men would but be exhorted to take the opportunity while it lasts, and entertaine the meanes of grace and salvation while they are offered: Oh what comfort might men gaine hereby, then at the last day they should receive an everlasting crowne of glory, they should then receive the fruits of their labours even the salvation of their soules. Let us all therefore as wee love our owne soules be exhorted, to entertaine the things of grace here, that wee may obtaine the things of glory hereafter.





MATTH. 20. 3, 4, 5, 6.

And he went out about the third houre and saw others standing idle in the market place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you, and they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth houre & ninth houre, and did likewise; and about the eleventh houre hee went out and saw others standing idle: and saith unto them; Why stand you here all the day idle? They said unto him, because no man hath hired us, he saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right that shall ye receive.



We have heard heretofore that all men being dead in finnes and trespasses are so farre from working out their owne salvation from themselves, as that they are not able to receive grace and mercy offered unto them from the Lord, for the comforting of their hearts here, and obtaining of happinesse hereafter, and therefore the last generall circumstance

stance of preparation we did handle, was this, That howsoever a naturall man is not able to understand the things of the Lord, yet the Lord will make all those which belong unto him able to receive the Lord Iesus, and then he will bestow the Lord Iesus and grace and salvation upon them. Now concerning this point, there are two circumstances of speciall consideration. The first is the circumstance of time in regard of the meanes, and that wee have already handled out of *Luke 19.42.* and the point then delivered was this; When God continues life and the meanes of salvation to a people, then this is the time when God meanes to bestow mercy and salvation upon them. The second circumstance concerning the time of this worke is in respect of the men upon whom God will worke: and some he workes upon in their tender age, some in their riper yeares, and some in their old age, at all times God doth call some; and this is the circumstance we will now grapple withall, and for this purpose I have chosen this part of the Parable; and in the Parable, as in all other Parables, besides the outside, and letter of the Parable, we must understand the sence and meaning thereof. When therefore we heare in the parable of a vineyard, and of the master of the vineyard, and of the servants that were hired to worke in this vineyard, and of the severall houres wherein they are hired; these are onely the out-sides of the Parable, the meaning thereof is this; by vineyard is meant the Church of God, and by the Master of the vineyard is meant the Lord Iesus, the



hiring of the servants into the vineyard, is nothing else but the powerfull calling of poore sinners by the worke of the Ministry, to the knowledge of the truth here, and happineffe hereafter, and in that he calls some at one houre, and some at another; the meaning is, that God calls some at one time, some at another, some in their tender yeares, some in their middle age, and some in their old age; some older, some younger: but that wee may understand the sence of the Spirit, in these words, *The third houre, the sixth houre, ninth houre, and the eleventh houre*: We must understand that the *Jewes* and the *Romanes* used to divide their dayes, which consisted of twelve houres into foure parts, from sixe to nine was one parcell of the day, from nine to twelve was the second, from twelve to three was the third part, and from three in the afternoone till sixe at night was the last parcell of the day. Now therefore the third houre was nine of the clocke, the sixt houre was twelve of the clocke, the ninth houre was three of the clocke in the afternoone, and the eleventh houre was five of the clocke, an houre before night. Now the Lord doth provide some soules for himselfe at nine a clocke in the morning, some at three in the afternoone, and some at the last east, at five of the clocke when the Sunne begins to set; in their old decrepit age the Lord meant to convert some unto himselfe. Some understand this parable of the calling of Ministers, good and bad, and in that it is said here, *They were hired every one for a penny*; they understand

derstand by this, that some will be Ministers for this living, some for that, some for preferment, some also come into the Ministry for the salvation of soules: but this cannot be the meaning of the Text here, and the reason is this. This Parable must be understood of those men of whom the last clause in the 19. Chapter is understood; in the 30. Verse of the 19. Chapter, the Text saith, *Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.* Now this Parable is set downe here in the beginning of this Chapter, and brought in by the Spirit of God meerey for the manifestation of the Scripture going before; therefore it is cleare that this Parable is to be understood concerning those persons spoken of before in the former Chapter. Of those also this Parable must be understood to whom it is applied afterward in the 16. Verse of this Chapter, it is said also, *The last shall be first, and the first shall be last.* So that the case is cleare, this Parable being brought in by the Spirit for the illustration & discovery of the former truth, therefore who ever they be that were there understood, and whoever they be to whō this Parable is afterward applied, of the same the Parable here must be understood; but it is cleare, that that Verse must be understood of those that are gracious, for the Text saith in the 19. verse of the former Chapter, *Every one that have forsaken houses or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife or children, or lands for my name sake shall receive an hundred fold, but many that are last shall be first, and many that be first shall be last, that is, they*  
that



that are first called if they trust unto themselves shall be last rewarded, and they that are last called if they renounce themselves and goe out of themselves shall be first rewarded, & then presently followes this parable as a manifestation of that truth, and this is the interpretation of the words. So that now wee see the meaning of the Parable. The Doctrine is, That God can and doth call in all ages, some in their yonger age, some in their riper yeares, and some in their old age; God calls some in all ages, but most and most usually before their old age; this is that wee shall observe here in the Parable, the Lord calleth at the third, sixe, and ninth houre, but at the eleventh houre he went out occasionally not thinking to see any standing idle at that time of the day, it was strange and unexpected to see any then idle, no man would hire any man to worke in his vineyard for one houre, and therefore the text saith, *he asked them, Why stand you here idle?* As who should say, hee did not once expect to see any idle at that time. For the explaining of the Doctrine there are two parts of it, wee will handle them severally, that we may perceive our proceeding the better. The first part is this, That God doth and can call severall of his servants at severall times: Secondly, That God doth call most, and most usually before their old age. First to beginne with the former, That God can, doth, and hath called severall of his servants at severall times, some in their younger age, some in their older, some in their tender yeares, some in their riper age; he calls them

them when hee seeth it most agreeable to his good pleasure; we shall observe that of *Timothy* that he was called in his tender yeares, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* There saith *S. Paul*, *Thou hast knowest the Scriptures from a child, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation* and therefore the Apostle tells us in the same Epistle, *that he was nourished up in the Word*, that is, he was made strong with the milke of the wholesome Scripture. So *1 King. 18. 12.* It is said that *Obadiah* feared God from his youth; and *1 Sam. 12.* It is said of *Samuel*, that he carried himselfe so blamelesse from his youth that hee was without all exception. So much to prove that some are called in their younger age; now we have examples of many also that were converted in their middle age, as that of the *Saylor*, *Acts 16. 37.* and that of *Lydia*, *Acts 16. 14.* and the conversion of *Paul*, *Acts 9.* and of *Zachew*, *Acts 16. 14.* 19. It is very probable that all these were converted in their middle age; for it is said of *Lydia*, that she was a seller of purple, and that shee got her living thereby; and the *Saylor*, it is like he was in his middle age, for he had a great charge of prisoners committed unto him; and *Paul* was in his prime when he was converted, for a long time after hee was converted, hee continued a great instrument to set forth Gods glory: and *Zachew* hee was a tolgatherer, and had gotten a good estate by that meanes. By this it appeareth that God did call these about their middle age. Now for old age, I must confesse it is true that there is not any pregnant example in Scripture of Gods hand this way: we know, *Gen. 12. 4.* compared with *Ishmael 24. 2.* that

2 Tim. 3. 15.

1 King. 18. 12.

1 Sam. 12.

Acts 16. 37.

Acts 16. 14.

Gen 12. 4.

Ishmael 24. 2.



A<sup>cts</sup> 2. 41.A<sup>cts</sup> 10.

*Abraham* the father of the faithfull was an idolater, and that God called him at 75. yeares old, but *Abraham* lived 175 yeares, so that *Abraham* was but in his middle age when he was called; but for any pregnant example, the Scripture is marvellous sparing this way: onely that which may be observed by probabilitie and may be gathered, depends upon those two places *A<sup>cts</sup> 2. 41.* there were 3000 soules added to the Church by the preaching of *Peter*; and *A<sup>cts</sup> 10.* It is said that *Cornelius* had got all his kindred and acquaintance together against *Peter* came, whom by the commandement of God he was sent for; and the text saith when *Peter* came, they were all gathered together to heare the Doctrine of life & salvation, & that while *Peter* was in speaking, the holy Ghost fell upon them all; now Divines reason thus, it is marvellous probable, that among those 3000 which were converted by *Peter*, some of them were aged men; and when *Cornelius* had gotten all his kindred and acquaintance together, and the holy Ghost fell upon them all: there were; it is very likely, some aged men among them whom God was pleased to shew mercy unto, we know these things may be, and there is good probabilitie of it, and wee see it out of the Text plainly, that God may call some in their old age; for he called some at the eleventh houre when it was almost night, but he hath reserved this power in his owne hands, he hath left no pregnant example thereof in the Scripture that we may not rely upon it; so then we see that God doth, and can, and hath called severall of his servants, at severall times,

times, some at the third houre, some at the sixt, some at nine, and some, though few at the eleventh houre; and the reason of the Point is double, why, the Lord doth deale thus in this case, hee doth not alwayes chuse young men that are strong, nor old men that are grave and wise; the ground of it is, that he might expresse the freeness of his favour in Iesus Christ, as if he should proclaime to the world that we could doe nothing of our selves this way, that we have nothing in us that can move God to shew mercy unto us, but that it is out of the freeness of his love in Iesus Christ; for should God call onely children, middle aged men, or old men onely, then men would conceive that there were something in the persons that moved him to this, either the weakenesse of the child, or else the innocencie thereof did move God to shew mercy thereunto, or else that God did delight in the strength or in the gifts and parts of a young man, or if he should call men in their old age onely, then men might thinke that their experience and gravitie did move God to call them onely; but when God calleth some in all ages and at all times, some young ones chosen, and some refused, some old men called, and others cast aside; then all men may conceive that there is nothing in the persons or parts of men, but that it proceedes all from the freeness of Gods mercy that he deales thus with the soules of poore sinners; it is the reason of that passage in the 15 verse of this Chapter, there the Master of the vineyard called the labourers together, and they received every man a penny; now they that came

howe is it that some are called and some are not?



first and had borne the heate of the day, when they saw that they which came last had as much as they, they murmured against the master of the vineyard saying, These last have wrought but one houre, and thou hast made them equall unto us which have borne the heate of the day, but then the master answered saying, Friend I doe thee no wrong, is it not lawfull for me to doe what I will with mine owne? as if he had sayd, I called thee at the third houre, and him at the sixth houre, and this man at the eleventh houre, it was out of my mercy that I called thee, and out of my mercy that I called him, is it not lawfull to doe what I will with mine owne; mercy is mine, and love is mine, and reward is mine, it is my mercy that I will call any at any time, and therefore I may dispose of it as I please. Secondly as the Lord doth expresse hereby the freeness of his grace, so the Lord also hereby doth marvelously magnifie his great power and All-sufficiency in saving the soules of poore people, that is able to doe what hee will in heaven and in earth; and so likewise in the hearts of his servants, there are many little ones that are fooles and have no knowledge and yet the Lord is able to convert them and make them understand the mysteries of salvation, there are many strong men that sturle up the wind like the Ass in the Wildernesse, they will not stoope, they will not be humbled, but they will doe what they list, and yet the Lord is able to overpower this sturdy heart of a young and strong man, and he is able to support the weak nature of a young one. And so men that are weatherbeaten in their finnes and screwed into

into their corruptions, God is able to overpower these, and convert these also and bring them home unto himselfe, if hee be a weake silly child, yet God is able to inlighten him, if hee have a sturdy heart, yet God can bring him downe, and if he be a weatherbeaten and an old sinner, yet God is able to call him and convert him also; and hereby the wonderfull power of the Lord is seene, in that hee is able to worke how hee will, when hee will, and upon whom he will in this kind; looke as it is with a Physitian, when a man hath a disease which lies low in his body and breeds rottenesse in his bones, insomuch that it is almost past cure, then the Physitian that can recover this man sheweth admirable skill, and he sheweth admirable power in regard that he is able to provide such meanes, and apply such meanes as thereby the party may be cured; by this meanes the skill of the Physitian and the power of him is magnified, so it is with this great God, when all sorts of sinners are called, and all corruptions subdued, your little ones that know nothing yet God inlightens them and supports them, *Timothy* did sucke the sincere milke of the Gospel on one side, as he did sucke the milke of his mothers breasts on the other side, and then there is a stubborne heart on another side, which breakes all bonds and snappes all cords aspeeces, hee cares for nothing, he will be ruled by no man, and then there is your old forlorne sinner, his sinnes are become a rottenesse in his bones, old incantered pride and increased covetousnesse and malice, God now to conquer all these and helpe these, doth not this shew admirable power in the Lord, thus



to worke and thus to order things for the good of his people: so that wee see that God doth and can call in all ages. We come now to the next passage, and that is this, however the Lord doth at severall times convert severall of his servants, and there is no time allotted to him, yet most and most usually God doth call them before their old age, and that some interpreters wittily observe out of the Text, it is sayd that the master of the Vineyard went out at the third, sixth and ninth houre, and saw some standing idle, and he sent them into his Vineyard; he went then on purpose to see and hire, and send in Labourers to work in his Vineyard; but the Text saith, he went out at the eleventh houre not to hire any, for he did not expect to see any then idle, but hee went out upon some other occasion, and seeing some then standing idle hee wondred at it and sayd, Why stand yee all the day idle, as if he should say, no man will hire you now, it is but one houre to night, it is time for men to leave working, and not to beginne to worke, he went out occasionally and meeting with these unexpected, hee wondred at these and therefore they observe, that if there had not beene great mercy in the master of the Vineyard, this was no time to hire Labourers in, so that the case is cleare, some are called in their youth, some in their middle age, some in their old age, some in their tender yeares, some in their ripper age, some old, some young, but this is most true that those whom God doth call it is most commonly in their middle age before they come to their old age, this is the generall course of God, he calls many before, some after, but most then, *Er list* these

there the wise man observes, that there is a time appointed for every purpose, and it appeareth that the middle age is the fittest time for this purpose; it is true indeede that all things depend upon Gods will, but yet there is wisdom in this God, and he ordereth things according to wisdom, and this seemes to bee the fittest season wherein the Lord should deale thus graciously in converting of a sinner; if wee consider either the nature of man, or the end of Gods giving grace, in both these respects, first if wee look to man, and regard either the constitution of his body or the gifts & qualities of his minde, we shall see that it is most fit for God to worke upon him in his middle age, he can doe it, and may doe it at another time, but that is the fittest time; and that first in regard of the constitution of his body, for it is observed by Philosophers that a man in his tender infancie lives the life of a tree onely, he onely eates and growes, and so it is with little children in their swadling cloathes, afterwards when he comes into further yeares, when he comes to be ten or twelve yeares old, then hee lives the life of a beast, he is taken away with those objects that are then most sutable to him; for a child to consider of the mysteries of life & salvation is almost impossible, he is not yet come to that ripenesse of judgement, but when he comes to the ripenesse of his yeares, from 20. yeares untill he come to be 40. or thereabouts, then the workes of reason put forth themselves, then his apprehension is quick to conceive a thing, and his memory is strong and pregnant to retaine a thing apprehended, and  
his



his heart is somewhat plyable, and his heart is somewhat frameable to receive that impression that is put upon him; now because in a mans middle yeares a billic of nature comes on, and reason comes on, insomuch that a man is able to conceive and partake of the things of grace, and fadom them, and the power of his understanding comes on whereby he is able to embrace them, therefore then is the fittest time that God should bestow his graces upon a man, looke as it is with waxe, if a man melt it, it will be too soft to hold any impression, and when it is too hard it will receive no scale neither, but when it is neither too soft nor too hard but in a middle temper betweene them both, then it is fit and ready to receive any impression whatsoever a man stamper upon it, it must neither be too extremely hot nor too hard, but mediately disposed, and then it will receive a scale, so it is with the nature of a man, in his tender yeares hee can hold nothing, he hath such a weake understanding; tell a child of the wonders of salvation, and it is impossible unlesse God workes wonderfully that hee should receive them; a mans nature in his infancie is like wax that is too soft, and the nature of an old man that also is like wax too hard, but now a middle aged man is neither so weake as the one, nor so hard as the other, but it is most fit for God to put a stamp upon, for his heart is then most plyable to receive the things of grace, and his affections are then most frameable to the minde of the Lord. Secondly, as this is the fittest time for God to worke upon a man in regard of the constitution of his body, so also in  
 regard

regard of corruption, because a young man that is come to the strength of his yeares, his minde will be sooner informed, and his judgement sooner convinced in regard of those corruptions that are in him, because hee hath not continued long in any base course, therefore hee is most easy to bee wrought upon, but when a man is growne old in wickednesse, when his soule as his body begins to buckle under the finnes of his younger yeares, when the heart is hardned, and the conscience seared in wickednesse, then it is desperately hard, it is a marvelous miracle for the meanes of salvation to take place in such a man, wee see it is marvelous hard to drive a naile into an old knotty snarly post, especially when it is weatherbeaten and seasoned, and clung together. It is no wonder that we spend our hearts and can doe no good, for those that have beene old weatherbeaten sinners, knotty snarly, stubborne rebellious hearts, a man were as good speak to the seats where they sit, and to the walls as to the hearts of them, it is marvelous hard to bring any thing home to the affections of such men, they will not away from their old corruptions, their hearts are rivited to their old lusts and corruptions, and therefore they will not entertaine that which may doe good unto them, if a man will transplant a tree, he doth not take an old withered rotten tree, that is not fit to bee transplanted, but hee takes a young tender twigge and transplants it, so it is here, those old trees, old sinners that are withering, dying and decaying, such are of the Leapers spots, and Blackamoorees hue, they that are settled in their corruptions, and resolve to take up their old cour-



ses; now they are too old to learne, thus long they have lived, and if they be now stubborne they will be so ever; if they be now peevish and malicious they will be so ever; if they be now covetous they will be so ever, they will not entertaine, they will not partake of those things which God hath appointed for their good. The third and last argument is in regard of grace it selfe; it is very convenient and reasonable that God should bestow grace upon those that are in their middle age, rather than upon those that are in their tender yeares, or in their old age, if we consider the end of the giving of grace, for what is the end of grace, and why doth God give a man grace and frame his heart so, that he may be fitted to partake of happinesse, but that the Lord hereby might receive the praise and glory of the riches of his grace? That they which have it may expresse the power of God, that hath called them out of darkenesse into marvellous light; the Lord is pleased to shew this favour towards them, that they might shew forth what God hath done to their poore soules, as the Prophet *David* doth; now this middle age of a man is the first time, wherein grace may receive most glory, and God most honour, in regard of the giving of it; for grace when it cometh to nature doth not destroy it, but perfect it, it doth not take away the naturall parts, as learning, knowledge and courage, and the like, but rectifieth them and turneth them the right way: as for example, he that had a strong memory, or a sharpe wit, or a great courage, and a violent affection, God preserveth and keepeth those still, but when grace comes God, turneth them the right.

right way and maketh him a fit instrument to set forth his glory, that before was a great enemy to the same, and therefore it is said that *Paul* was a chosen vessell for the Lord, and why? because *Saul* was a man of great learning, fiery zeale, fervent love, and undanted courage, and therefore when he persecuted the Church, it is said that hee breathed forth persecutions; he got him a good Steed, & got letters from *Damascus*, & haled all poore Christians to prison where he came, but when grace came, the Lord did still retaine the naturall power of zeale, love, courage, and learning, the Lord did retaine all these; that tongue that before spake against God is now fitted to confute the adversary, hee convinced them mightily saith the text, & that courage whereby he before was carried against Gods Saints is, now fitted to suffer persecution, imprisonment and disgrace for his names sake, and therefore in all reason it was fittest that the Lord should take *Paul* in the middle of those yeares, that he might employ him to the furtherance of his praise, that had before beene a great hinderance to his Gospel; It is said by the Apostle *Paul*, that the members of a godly mans body, and the faculties of his soule, are weapons of righteousness; a gracious tongue will speake those things which may be for Gods praise, and the good of men; a gracious foote will be swift to runne the wayes of Gods Commandements: now the wisest workeman will not chuse an instrument that is broken and unfit for service; now an old man is a broken and crazie instrument, little honour can God have by his tongue when it falters, little good can God have by his understanding, and

D d z      learning,



learning, and wisdom, when as in regard of his age he is become a child againe, and therefore it is marvellous reasonable that God should take this time for the expressing of his grace; for when a man is in the strength of nature, then grace turns all the members of his body and faculties of his soule the right way, and a man runnes as earnestly forward in a good course, as hee did before in the wayes of wickednesse; so then gather up the point, if in regard of the constitution of his body, a man is then fittest to receive the things of grace, if in regard of corruption he is not so hardened to resist grace, if also then he is fittest to glorifie God for bestowing grace upon him; then it is reasonable, that as God can call when he will, so it is most fit that he should call him before he is in his old declining age, when his body is fit for nothing but to be carried upon a coffin and laid into the grave; now we see then that it is cleare, God can call at any time, but God doth most usually call most of his servants before their old age: Let us now see what use we can make of the Point; and first observe from hence a ground of Instruction; we must take heede that we be not too rash & giddily censorious, in setting downe a small censure upon men; seest thou men running on headlong in the wayes of wickednesse, yet never conclude therefore that God will never shew mercy and favour unto them, and worke upon the soules of them, for we know that God can call at the eleventh houre, and therefore be not too rash in censuring this way, but receive the exhortation of the Apostle, 1. Cor. 4. 5. There saith the Text, *Judge nothing before the time untill the Lord come, &c.*

2 Cor. 4. 5.

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FINIS.



# PREPARING

FOR

# CHRIST.



*No man can come unto me, except the Father  
which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise  
him up at the last day.*



On the application of the merits  
and obedience of Christ Iesus  
to the soule of a poore sinner,  
and for the enjoying of the  
same, there are two things  
mainly observable; First, the  
soule must be prepared for the  
Lord Iesus; and secondly, it must be ingrafted, and  
implanted into Christ Iesus, before it can be made  
partaker of the saving grace and salvation in Christ  
contained, and from Christ communicated to those



## The Table.

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that love and feare his name. Now concerning this great work of preparation, wherein is the stand of a Christian, for if the heart bee but prepared, *the Lord will then suddenly come into his Temple* (as the Prophet *Malachy* speaks.) Now this preparation consists of two parts: First, the dispensation of Gods gracious work upon the soule of a poore sinner. Secondly, the frame and disposition that God works upon the soule, in converting it to himselfe. Vpon these two hangs the maine work of preparation: and herein lyeth the great drift of a Christian; for the mercy of God is very free, but we cannot make men fit to receive this mercy. And therefore in preparation heretunto, wee must apprehend two things: somewhat must prepare; secondly, somewhat must be prepared: he that doth prepare, is the Lord; he that doth receive the work, and is prepared, is the soules of those whom God hath elected to salvation: So that as I said before, something on Gods part must bee observed, something on mans part must be considered: on Gods part the dispensation of his work, and on mans part the disposition that is wrought in the soule. I come to the first thing, which is the maine thing to be handled out of the Text, namely, the manner how God worketh upon the soule when hee prepares it for himselfe; and this discovereth it selfe in two particulars: we will handle them both together. First, God doth pluck a poore sinner from his corruptions and darling finnes, to which he was glued and fastned: and secondly, as he draweth the soule from

sinne,

sinne; so he draweth it to himselfe to beleeve in him, and to receive mercy from him. First God plucks the soule from sinne: secondly he drawes it to the Lord Iesus. And for this purpose wee have chosen this text, that so we may have some footing for that which we speak out of Scripture, and my purpose, is not to handle all particulars in the Text, which are many, but to choose those that do concerne our present purpose, and best fit us in our proceeding. And the two maine points which I meane to discover out of the Text are these: First, that every man in his naturall condition is fastened and settled in the state of sinne and corruption. Secondly, that the Lord by a holy kind of violence plucks off the soule from sin, and draweth it to himselfe. These are the two things which in the Text I aime at, but the second is the main thing I look at: & we must handle them both, because the drawing of a thing from another implyeth that the thing which is drawn was fastned to some thing from whence it is to be drawne; and therefore when the Lord saith, he will draw a poore sinner to himselfe, it implies that wee were stuck fast and glued to our corruptions, from whence we must be drawne; and when this is once done, then the face is towards heaven, towards *Zion*; then it is fitted to receive mercy from the Lord Iesus: and because this drawing unto God doth imply a fastning of the soule unto sinne, from whence it must be drawne, the point therefore is this; namely, that every mans naturall estate and condition is fastned, and settled, and ri-



veted to his finnes and corruptions; a poore creature by nature is not onely ingrafted into sinne, but he is rooted into the rebellions of *Adam*, and is growne strong with sinfull corruptions and distempers of his owne soule; nay a man is not able to expresse the strong combination, betweene sinne and the soule; it is scrwed into sinne, and riveted into corruptions, which have beene conyaied thereunto and derived from our first parents: and that the soule is thus fastned, and settled, and glued to sinne, wee may observe it in two particulars; Partly in the dominion that sinne and Satan hath over the soule: Partly in the amity that the soule hath to sinne. First then, consider the dominion that sinne hath over the soule, that soveraigne and uncontroulable command which sinne exerciseth over the soule of every poore creature under heaven, which is in a naturall estate, in the bond of iniquity, and under the power of Satan; and we shall see that the soule is fastened to sinne, *Acts 26. 18.* the text saith, that they are under the power of Satan, *To open their eyes*, saith the text, *that they may turne from darknesse to light, and from the power of Satan to God.* If you aske me how the Devill hath power over poore sinners, the Apostle telleth you, *That he catcheth them at his pleasure*: the proud man must go no further than he will, and the covetous man must do nothing but that which he list: but this is not all neither, though this be sufficient to discover the power that Satan hath over the soule of a sinner: but when hee hath thus taken a poore soule,

soule, and fettered him in this case, he then shuts him  
 up in prison. *Tim. 2. 26.* there the next saith, that  
 the diuell takes poore sinners, prisoners at his will.  
*Gal. 3. 22.* it is said, that all men by nature are un-  
 der the law, shut up under sinne: it is a phrase ta-  
 ken from prisoners; a prisoner that is under the  
 hand of the jaylor, and hath his legges fettered, and  
 is shut up in prison, we use to say that such a man is  
 sure enough. And not only so; sinne and Satan  
 have not only taken a poore prisoner, and fettered  
 him, and shut him up in prison, but they have  
 slaine him, and taken away his life also; and therefore  
 now sinne must needs be fastened deep in the  
 soule of a poore sinner. If a cheefe, or a Traytor,  
 were apprehended, and convicted, and imprisoned,  
 and had bolts and fetters upon him; and further, if  
 he were condemned, and hang'd, drawne, and quar-  
 ter'd; then though the partie were never so reso-  
 lute, or his practises never so outrageous, yet men  
 might say, now he is sure enough, now he will  
 steale no more, nor plot treason any more: just  
 so it is with the soule of a poore sinner, every man  
 naturally, is so farre forth under the power of  
 sinne and Satan, that he is not only surpris'd and  
 taken by Satan, but his finnes are as so many bolts,  
 and fetters about him, nay he is shut up in prison;  
 nay further, sinne hath slaine him out right, in so  
 much that a man may as soone pluck hell from the  
 place where it is, as pluck a poore sinner out of  
 his corruptions. The devill hath not only taken a  
 poore sinner, but he hath fettered him and impriso-



ned him, and taken away his life; and therefore  
 now the devil hath him sine enough, as we may  
 so speak; he is now firmly fastened unto him. This  
 is the first passage, adde to this the second. As the  
 dominion of sine over the soule is great, so also  
 that same kind of league, and close kind of firme  
 fastning, that same union that is betweene the soule  
 and corruption, is marvellous great. The Scrip-  
 ture never enough expresseth the love that is be-  
 tweene sine and the soule; look what love and  
 union there is between the husband and the wife,  
 Rom. 7. 2. there saith the text, the woman which  
 is in subjection to a man, is bound to the man  
 while he liveth; the one must die before the other  
 can marry; such is the union between sine and  
 the soule, a poore sinner is married and given o-  
 ver to sine, in so much that before the Lord  
 conquers and slayeth sine, the soule is never  
 free. Nay further, look as the members are to the  
 body, such is sine to the soule, Collos. 3. 5. *mur-  
 der your members which are on earth*, saith the Apo-  
 stle, as fornication, uncleannesse inordinate affecti-  
 on, and the like: nay sine is called the old man  
 in Scripture, as if sine were another man in us;  
 there is a head of sine, and an eye of sine, and a  
 hand of sine, and a foot of sine; in every sinfull  
 creature it is as another man within him. Nay to  
 go further, Matth. 16. 24. there sine is called a  
 mans selfe, there, saith our Saviour, *let a man deny  
 himselfe and take up his crosse and follow mee*: let  
 him deny himselfe, that is, let him deny his pride,

Lon

E E E A

and

and his other sinfull distempers and abominations. I tell you, a naturall mans finnes are as neere unto him, as his own life; he will part with his own blood, before he will part with his corruptions; nay his finnes are himselfe; they are so fast and so firmly fetted unto him, that you may as easily pluck selfe from selfe as a man from his finnes. So then if it be so, that the dominion that Satan hath over the soule of a sinner, is the strongest of all other; if the union betwene sinne and the soule be the firmest of all other; then it is cleare, that every naturall man sticks fast in sinne; he is bound hand and foot in sinne; sinne and a man makes *but one man*; and therefore it must needs be a hard thing to pluck a man from his sinfull distempers: so that then the case is cleare, every man is informed of this, that the soule is fastned and glued, and firmly fetted unto sinne. We will now proceed unto the use of the poynt. And first for instruction, we may here see that wofull servitude and base slavery, that all poore creatures are in, if they be no better by grace than they are by nature: though they carry it out never so bravely, and lift up their heads never so high, and think their penny good silver, yet their servitude is of all other the worst; and their vassalage, of all other in the world, the best. There was never poore soule stuck so fast in a pit of clay, wherein was no bottome, as a poore soule sticketh in his finnes and corruptions. You have heard of the house of bondage, that

I use.



that the Israelites were in, when they were in Egypt, how miserably they were afflicted and tormented by the hands of unreasonable Tyrants, how they were forced to gather their straw, and then to scorch themselves in the fiery furnace, to make brick. You have heard of *Itchabaz* in the dungeon, how he stuck fast in the mire and filth, and could have no ease untill *Evilmerodach* came and delivered him. You have heard of the Mill that *Samson* grinded in, after the *Philistines* had put out his eyes, that they should then put him as a horse to grind in the Mill. You would think it marvellous troublesome and troublesome to be thus oppressed by unreasonable men. I tell you, the house of bondage that the Israelites were in, was a heaven; it was a Paradise, to that slavery, that bondage, that servitude, that vassalage which every poore sinner is in under sinne and Satan: nay *Samsons* Mill was an excellency, it was a glory to that slavery which every poore sinner is faine to performe, to be at Satans call, and to be at the devils command; if he bids a man to be proud, then he must be proud; if the divell command a man to be covetous, then he must obey him, and go like an Oxe to the slaughter, and a Foole to the stocks, to do whatsoever sinne and Satan bids him: what a base slavery and servitude is this? *Jeremie* in the dungeon, it was a delight to be there where he might look up to heaven, and leave the desires of his soule with God; but for a poore soule to be in the dungeon of his finnes, where his mind cannot be enlightened, nor his

his judgement informed ; where hee can see nothing, nor know nothing ; where there is no help, where all the men on earth, nor all the Angels of heaven, cannot help him ; what a wofull miserable wretched condition is this ? Oh that God would open mens eyes, and set open the consciences of those that look so high and bragge of their privileges : Many men boast of their base courses, and wicked practises, as if a thiefe should brag of his chaines and fetters ; this is a wofull misery : many creatures make this a great part of their liberty, that they can break all bonds, and snap all cords in peeces, and cast the holy commandements of God behind their backs, not to be perswaded, not to be yoked ; and then they think they are the bravest men alive ; they care not what the Minister saies, they care not what the word commands ; oh these men think they are in the greatest liberty of all men under the Sunne, let me speak a little to these men ; didst thou never see a poore prisoner look out of Newgate, and cry bread, bread, for the Lords sake ; or didst thou never here of a poore man that was fetter'd and cast into a filthy dark dungeon, where light never came, where Sunne never shined ; if you have seene these, or heard of these, do you think these men free and at liberty ? I appeale to your owne consciences in this case. Why truly these men are free men in regard of that bondage, that slavery, that vassallage, that those men are in, which break Gods commandements. Thy body indeed may be at liberty, and may go  
B b b from



from alehouse to alehouse; but alas thou hast a poore soule, that is shut up in sinne, and corruption, nay it never saw the Sunne, the Sunshine of the Gospell never came unto it, never any promise tooke place in thy soule, never did any counsell do thee any good, and yet notwithstanding, these base slaves, the miserable prisoners, those are they, that account of the poore servants of God, as if they were the basest persons in the world: If there be any poore soules that humble themselves, and obey his commandements, then they count those poore sneaks, and base fellows; if God commands any thing, they obey it, if he threatens, they tremble, and howle, and cry, and even breake their hearts because of their sinnes, they account this as a base thing, they count these men of no spirits; but when no feare of man terrifieth them, when the word of God cannot rule them, these are royall hearts, and the brave spirits of the world; brave spirits, for the Lord Iesus sake think of it. Of all peasants in the world, I tell you, they are the basest bondslaves, the most miserable vassals that ever breathed on the face of the earth, to have sinne to be a mans commander, and the devill his jaylor, and his heart a hell; and to have an ill conscience to be his hangman that continually keepeth the roap about his neck, when there is not one haire breadth betweene death and him: but if it please God by death to rurne the ladder, then he is hanged in hell for ever: is this freedome? are these the

the brave spirits of the world? the Lord deliver his from such liberty. Should we see a malefactor arrayned, imprisoned, condemned, and gone to the place of execution, and upon the top of the ladder, and the Hangman having the rope about his neck, ready to turne him off, would wee think this man a free man? would we think him a man of a brave spirit, that is in this condition? I tell thee, thy condition, if thou beest in a naturall estate, is farre worse. Thou art a poore soule, that hast been imprisoned, and fettered, thou art under the bondage of sinne, and Satan, and thy evill conscience is like a hangman, that every day hath the noose about thy neck; and if the ladder by death be but once turned, then thou art hanged in endlesse, and caselesse torments for ever, never to be comforted, never to be refreshed; and yet these brag and say, who is Lord over us? why, I tell you the devill is Lord over you, and sinne is your commander; you are in the greatest slavery of any men, under the cope of heaven. This is the first use, to shew the miserable slavery, that all poore creatures are in.

In the second place, it is a word of exhortation. Is it so, that all sinnefull men are in such a wretched condition, then we ought to be perswaded, and intreated, especially the servants of God, that have had their bolts knocked off, and have beene freed from the slavery of sinne, and Satan, these ought to be exhorted, to put on the bowells of compassion, and to pittie these poore creatures,

2 Ps.



these poore prisoners, and to lend them their helping hand, to pluck them out of the mire and clay, wherein they stuck: It is the custome of the world, if a poore prisoner be taken and condemned, and is going to the place of execution; why, reason perswades men thus farre, to yearne towards him, they will be ready to pittie him, and say, alas poore man, he is alive now, within this short time he will be dead; and what shall become of his soule who knowes, unlesse God have mercy upon him, he is like to perish for ever. Why, doe you see a company of proud persons, covetous wretches, prophane creatures in the world, alas they are going to the place of execution, there is but one hayres breadth between them, and everlasting damnation: if God turne the ladder once, and a naturall death creep upon them, what then shall become of their poore soules? take notice therefore of these poore soules, and pittie poore prisoners, that are in such a wretched condition. If a child that had a father of good abilitie, and of some place in the countrey wherein he lived, if he should see his father for some offence, apprehended by the officers, and committed to prison; or if he should see him go begging, from doore to doore, with his fetters and his bolts about his heeles, oh how it would grieve him, oh how he would weep, and howle, and say, little had I thought, my poore father would have come to this misery: or if a wife should see, her husband

band going to the gallows, for some haynous crime committed, I know shee would have a heart to mourn for her husband in this kind, she would be ready to say, little thought I, that my husband should have come to such an end, it is his owne folly, that hath brought him to this. Can you pittie those that are overtaken with outward bonds, with outward misery, and can you mourne for that which is fallen upon their bodies, why do thus much more, for the soule of thy father, for the soule of thy wife, for the soule of thy child, or thy friend, and say, little did I think that my father, or my husband, or my child, should ever have been shut up in hell, and fettered by Satan; little did I think that ever sinne, or Satan, should be his jaylor, that the devill should hale him to the place of execution: alas he cannot speak a good word, nor perform any good duty; he cannot pray in his family, but is shut up under pride and covetousnesse, and drunkennesse, and prophanenesse. If thou canst pittie and pray, for the body of thy father, or for the body of thy husband, or friend, why then pittie and pray, much more for the soule of thy father, husband, or friend. It is that which is observable *Deut. 10. 19.* there saith the text, *you shall deale kindly with strangers; why, because yee your selves were strangers, in the land of Egypt:* we that have been in prison, under sinne and Satan, and have beene in the same condition our selves, we know what it is, to be shut up under a hard heart, and a blind



mind, and distempered affections; we know what it is to be prentise to the devill, and therefore this should move us, to deale pittifully with poore miserable captived creatures; we our selves were in the same condition, we our selves lived without God in the world heretofore, as those do now. Nay, this is that which the Apostle presseth, *Tit: 3, 1, 2, 3.* there saith the text, *Put them in mind to be subiect to principalities, and powers, and to speak evill of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meeknesse unto all men; for we our selves also, were sometimes disobedient, foolish, deceiving, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice, hatefull, and hating one another:* you that have beene prisoners, and have had your soules, pierced with bolts and fetters; why, remember your own estate, and pittie poore prisoners, that are now in that estate; that you have formerly been in. Hath the Lord opened thy eyes, and humbled thy heart, hath the Lord broke thy bonds, and knocked off thy bolts, and let thee out of prison, why then pittie poore prisoners, you were such once your selves, hating God, and hatefull one to another; and that you are not so, blesse God for it. You know what it is to be in such a condition, to be troubled with a hard heart; you that have beene in prison, and know what it is to have hard hearts, and dead soules, and blind minds; why, pittie poore prisoners that are in the same case, and cry to heaven for help for them, intreat God to free and deliver them from the bondage

bondage of sinne and Satan : in the 12. of Matth.  
 9. 10. it is that our Saviour presses upon the Pha-  
 risees, there saith the text, *what man shall there be  
 among you, that shall have one sheep fall into a pit on  
 the sabbath day, and will not lift it out, how much  
 then is a man better than a sheep?* so say I, if any  
 of you should have a child, or a father, or a hus-  
 band fall into a Well, would you not use all meanes  
 possible, to lift him out? oh here one would be  
 breathing, and would scarce speake, there another  
 would be hoarse with crying, help, help, for the  
 Lords sake, my child, my father, my husband is  
 drowning; thus you would do, and you do well,  
 and mercifully: but have you care of oxen, and  
 of the bodies of your sonnes, and your fa-  
 thers, and husbands, and have you no pittie, no  
 compassion upon their soules? you that see the  
 soules of your husbands, sunk down into a dirty  
 pitt, into a filthy dungeon, into a drunken pro-  
 phane course; thou that seest thy wife fallen into  
 a course of chambering, and wantonnesse, if thou  
 seest this, why then call and cry for succour,  
 and reliefe, and pray for help, and labour by all  
 meanes possible, to pluck out these soules out of  
 the gall of bitternesse, and out of the bond of ini-  
 quitie, labour to pluck them out of sinne here, and  
 damnation hereafter. Look as a man deales with  
 carriage, if a Cart be at a stay, or at a sett, in the  
 high way, why then the Carter that drives it, doth  
 what he can himselfe, he sets his shoulder to the  
 wheele, and labours as much as in him lyeth, to  
 lift



lift the Cart out; but if this will not doe, then he craves the help of some others, especially if there go two or three teames together, then he gets all the other teames set to this load, to draw it out, and especially if the load be going, then they cry, it is comming, it is comming, and labour by all meanes possible, to lift it out altogether. Dost thou see the heart of thy father, or the heart of thy child, at a stand, under pride, covetousnes, and prophanesse; why, then pray thou what thou canst, and do what thou mayst, put thy shoulder to the wheele, and use all meanes to pluck them out; but if this will not do, use all helps that can be by the supply of others, and crave their help in this case, intreat them to help thy father, or thy child, or thy husband at a dead lift: say, my father, or my husband, is sunk forty fadam deep into the earth, he is buried in the world, and in his corruptions, especially if the load be comming, if he be almost perswaded to become a Christian, then labour earnestly and cry, one pluck for my poore husband, one pluck for my poore father, he is comming, he is comming, therefore pull, pull, for the Lords sake: and go further, and cry mightily unto the Lord, that it would please him, to pluck him out of the ground, look up to heaven, and intreat the Lord to lend his helping hand; if man cannot, nor neighbours will not, why then look up higher unto heaven for succour, and say, good Lord, my father is a prisoner, and a bondslave to sinne and Satan, therefore, good Lord beseech thee, break those bonds

bonds, and knock off those bolts of pride, and infidelity, and the like: in the 12. of the Acts when Peter was taken prisoner, it is said that prayer was made, without ceasing of the Church unto God for him; and the same night when Herod would have brought him forth, Peter was sleeping between two souldiers, bound in two chaynes, and the Keepers before the doore kept the prison; and the Angell of the Lord appeared unto him, and a light shined in the prison; and he rayssed him up, and said, Peter arise, and the chaynes fell off from him: afterwards he came unto an iron gate, that lead unto the City, and that opened of its own accord. Why, that God that was able to knock off the bonds of Peter, and was able to make the iron gate open of it selfe unto him; that God is able to break the bonds of sinne and Satan, wherewith thy father, husband, or friend are fetter'd; he is able to break the brasen doore of their hearts, which hinders the light of the Gospell from shining in, and therefore cry to this God for help and succour, and mercy, and say, good Lord, thou that wert able to break off the setters, wherewith Peter was bound, and to make the iron doore to open, good Lord I beseech thee, do thou work upon my father, my husband, or my child, especially that he may never be so hardened, slip the lock, and break in upon him, and humble him here, that he may be saved hereafter; especially when you see the load is coming, then draw, oh then draw with all your power; when you see their minds are inlightned, and their



their judgements informed, why then the load is comming, pray therefore then to God especially for help; who knowes but God may humble them, and convert them to himselfe, and therefore strive amayne with God, use all meanes both ordinary and extraordinary for the benefit of them: and this shall suffice for the first passage, namely, that the soule of a man by nature is glued, and fastened to sinne and corruption. The next poynt considerable, is this, who it is that must deliver the soule from the bondage of sinne and Satan, and pluck it from sinne: a man cannot do this of himselfe, it is the Lords own work that must bring it to passe, for so saith the text, *no man cometh to mee, except the father draweth him*; it is he that must do the deed. The poynt is this, the Lord by a holy kind of violence, doth pluck the hearts of sinners from sinne, unto himselfe, this is the scope of the text, and this is the ayme of our Saviour in the verse, and this is the work, on Gods part considerable: for as we have heard before, we must observe two things in preparation; First Gods act upon the soule, Secondly the frame and disposition that is wrought in the soule by God. The act of God is a drawing of the soule by an holy kind of violence, from sinne unto himselfe. I will not here speak of the inability of the soule, or that God is the author of this work, for these I have handled before, out of that place, *Ezech. 11. 19. it is God that taketh away the stony heart, and giveth a heart of flesh*: we will only now, speak, of the dispensation

penſation of the work of God, of the manner how God prepares a ſinner for himſelfe, and the text ſaith, he doth it by *drawing*, he doth by a holy kind of violence, draw the ſoule from corruptions, and ſinnefull courſes, unto himſelfe; and I will handle both theſe together, the plucking of the ſoule from ſinne, and drawing of it to God, becauſe they are both made up together, by one action and motion; as for example, look as it is with a man, that rends one peece of wood from another, as he plucks the one peece from the other, ſo he drawes that which he plucks to himſelfe, he doth not only draw it from the other, but he drawes that part, neerer to himſelfe; ſo that both are made up, by one action and operation: and ſo it is here, the plucking of a ſinner from corruption, and drawing of him to God, both theſe are acted by God at once, and therefore I will handle them both together; only obſerve, there muſt be ſuch a kind of thing as this is, before God will take poſſeſſion of the ſoule, namely, there muſt be a ſevering of the ſoule from ſinne, and a drawing of it to God; look as it is with a mans body, if any part thereof be out of joynt, or broken, before this part can be joynted aright againe, haply there is ſome filth, ſome moyſt humours about it, or haply there is ſome dead fleſh in it, now this dead fleſh muſt be taken away, and the filth and ill humours muſt be removed, before that part can be ſet in its right place againe; ſo it muſt be with the ſoules of Gods ſervants, every



soule by sinne is unjoynted, and wholly removed from God: the soule indeed was made for God, and should have closed with him, and fastened upon him, but by reason of sinne, the soule is quite broken; now before the soule can be made fit for God, before it can be put into a right frame, all that noysome corruption that is in it, and those base lusts that hang upon it, the soule must be freed from these, before God can work upon it, or that receive mercy and salvation from God, before it can performe any good duty; and this is done by drawing: the Lord by a holy kind of violence, doth pluck the soule from those sinnes that harbour in it, and those distempers that presse upon it, and then he drawes it unto himselfe. And for the opening of this, we must consider three things: First, what the nature of this drawing is, what is meant hereby. Secondly the meanes how, and whereby God commeth to draw a poore sinner, from sinne to himselfe. Thirdly, the arguments why God must thus draw with a holy kind of violence, and that God may do this without any prejudice at all to the will. First, what the nature of this drawing is; and we must understand, that there is a double kind of drawing in Scripture, this word implyeth a double sense in the phrase of Scripture: there is first a morall kind of drawing, it is a word used by Divines, but that I may speak to the capacity of all, I will terme it an outward or an externall kind of drawing, which is this, when a man by reasons propounded, and good things

things offered to the understanding and the will, comes thereby to have his mind enlightned, and his will moved and perswaded, to embrace and give entertaynement to the things offered: and observe in this two things; first, that it is only outward in regard of the subject; secondly, that it putteth nothing into the heart, but stirreth up that which is in the heart already: there is nothing but objects offered, and arguments propounded to perswade the soule to the love and liking of the thing offered; and this is usuall in Scripture, and it is said to bee a compelling of a man; it propounds arguments to the soule, and so brings on the soule to the affecting of any thing; in the 16 of the *Acts* 15. it is said of *Lydia* after shee was converted, her soule clave to the holy man *Paul*, and she besought them saying; *If you have judged me to bee faithfull to the Lord, abide in my house*: and then saith the text, *she constrained us*, shee laid such hookes upon them that shee constrained them, how is this? shee layd no violent hands upon them, no, but shee used arguments that were so forcible, and reasons that were so pithy, that she perswaded the Apostle *Paul* and those that were with him to yeeld unto her request: *if you have judged me faithfull come into my house*; as if shee had sayd, if you beleeve that I have received the grace of God by you, if ever you meanes to receive any comfort from the blessing of God upon the worke wrought in me by your meanes, if you think that my soule hath been made partaker of any good from you, come then in unto



my house and abide with me; now unless *Paul* would have denyed his owne work which God by his grace had shewed him, he must yeeld unto her, and come in, and therefore the text saith, that *shee constrained him*, that is, shee did by arguments and reasons propounded unto him; perswade him to grant her request: so in the 22 of *Matt.* it is sayd that the King when he had made a great feast, and those that were bidden would not come, he bids his servants go out into the high wayes, and compell men to come in; there is nothing meant there but this morall, outward drawing by strength of arguments, when by arguments propounded, we draw and perswade men, to do that we would have them performe: but this is not meant here in the text, and I prove it thus, because it is not the purpose of our Saviour Christ in the text, for Christ having taught a spirituall and an heavenly Sermon, the Pharisees murmured and said, *Is not this Iesus the sonne of Ioseph, whose father and mother we know, how is it then that he saith, he came down from heaven?* Iesus when he perceived their murmuring, said unto them, *Why murmur you among your selves?* and that he might prevent the offence that the feeble ones might take at the example of the Pharisees, he saith unto them, *No man can come unto me, except my father draweth him*, as though he had said, be not you troubled, and perplexed, because these great scollers do not beleve my doctrine, and embrace it, it is not in them willing, but in mee drawing; do not you think ill of my doctrine

doctrine of salvation, because your wise men and your brave men, will not beleve it; for I tell you, though these have had arguments propounded, to perswade them to this, yet they cannot embrace my doctrine and beleve, unlesse my father draweth them; they have had their hearts convinced and their mouths stopped, but yet all this will not do, unlesse my father draweth them. Secondly, this kind of caution, except my father draweth him, no man come unto mee, is implied, that if my father doth draw him, he will come; and the Papists themselves confesse this, that a man may have this morall drawing arguments, perswading, and reasons alluring to come unto God, and receive mercy from him, and yet he may not come; but they that have this drawing meant in the text, they will undoubtedly come; *no man comes unto mee, except the father which hath sent mee draweth him*, and therefore whosoever the father doth draw, he shall come, and certainly will come, and therefore this drawing, that is meant here, is not a morall drawing by outward perswasions: thus much for the clearing of this poynt, namely that a morall and externall drawing is not to be understood in the text. This will not serve the turne, there is more in it than so, we must therefore search further, into the nature of this word drawing; and God is said to draw a poore sinner unto himselfe, in the second place, when he is not only pleased to enlighten a mans mind, and offer arguments to his understanding, and lay truths

and



and propound promises unto him, for this will not doe it, this is only an outward drawing; but when the Lord is pleased to put a new power into the soule of a sinner, and with all, to carry the will to the object propounded, that it may embrace it; when God is pleased, not onely to offer good things to the soule, but to enable the soule to lay hold upon the things offered, not only to offer Christ and salvation, but to work effectually upon the heart, and make it able to give entertainment to Christ, then the Lord is said to draw a sinner unto himselfe, from sinne and corruption; and this is termed an internall kind of drawing, and this is meant here in the text, it is not only the propounding of arguments, to move and pluck the soule, but the Lord doth by his effectual power, draw the soule from sinne, and bring it unto himselfe. And therefore observe two things, touching this internall drawing, namely, that there is a seperation first wrought, betweene sinne and the soule, the union that is betweene sinne and the soule, is broken. Secondly, that when the soule is once severed, and broken off from sinne, then it comes to a right set, to a right frame and disposition towards God, and then it goeth no further, but here it stoppeth; and this is that which I call plucking and drawing of a poore sinner from his corruptions to God, in both which actions the will of the creature is wrought upon, plucked from sinne and set towards God, and of it selfe it doth not move at all. I expresse it thus, look as it

is with the wheele of a clock, or the wheele of a lack that is turned aside, and by some contrary poyse set the wrong way. He now that will set this wheele right, must take away the contrary poyse, and then put the wheele the right way, and and yet the wheele doth not goe all this while of it selfe, but first there is a stopping of the wheele, and a taking away of the poyse: and secondly the wheele must be turned the right way, and all this while the wheele is only a sufferer; so it is with the soule of a man, the heart of a man, and the will of a man, and the affections of a man, they are the wheeles of the soules of men, the Lord Iesus made them at the first to runne to heaven-ward, and to God-ward, but when *Adam* sinned, then the poyse of corruptions prevailed so farre forth over them, that they drew the heart, the mind, the will of man from God, and made it runne the wrong way to the divell-ward, and to hell-ward; now when the Lord cometh to set these wheeles aright, he must take away the poyse and plummet that made them runne the wrong way, that is, the Lord by his almighty power, must overpower those finnes and corruptions which harbour in the soule, and have dominion over the soule: as for example, if a man have a covetous heart, inso-much that the world will not suffer him to heare, and pray, and performe any good duty, then God must pull away that plummet, he must pluck the soule from that sinne, and then he must draw it to himselfe, that is, he must draw it to Godward, and to



Zion-ward, and make it to be at his command, that Gods spirit as a new plummet, may carry it and order it, and now it doth nothing all this while, God must first take away the contrary plummet, that drew the soule aside, and then the frame of the soule will be to God-ward, it will be in a right frame and order, it will runne the right way, and all this while the will is only a sufferer, and this I take to be the meaning of the text: That God by a holy kind of violence, rendeth the soule of a poore sinner, and withall by his almighty power, stops the force of a mans corruptions, and makes the soule teachable, and framable to the will of God, it makes it to lie leuell, and to be at Gods command, and this is done by a holy kind of violence; and so much for these poynts of speculation, without which I could not well open the poynt. But now we see the bottome of the poynt, namely, that God doth by a holy kind of violence, pluck and draw men from their corruptions, unto himselfe. The next thing to be considered is, the meanes whereby God thus haleth the soule, and draweth the heart of a poore sinner unto himselfe: and the meanes are foure. The first work of the Lord is this, he lets in a light into the soule of a poore sinner, and discovereth unto him, that he is in a wrong way, and tells him, there is another way that he must walk in, if ever he meane to come to heaven, and this is the first meanes, when the soule of a sinner is inlightned, and his mind informed that he is in a wrong course, and that he must take

take a better course, or else he shall never come at heaven, and this the Lord doth suddenly, the sinner not perceiving of it, the Lord setteth a sudden flash upon his soule, and telleth him that he is going unto hell, the soule presently wonders at this, and marvels how it came to passe, *Esay 66.*

1. there saith the text, *I am sought of them that asked not for mee, and I am found of them that sought mee not*, the Lord putteth a sudden light into soules of men, which they never dreamed of. Hypocrites if they can but goe to Church, and sit in the Church as Gods servants do, and leane on their elbowes, and heare as Gods people do, then all is well with them, but as many of them as belong to God, God will discover unto them that they are in a wrong way, and he will shew and reveale another way unto them, which they never dreamed of; and therefore this is that we shall observe, haply we shall see a man come riding into a town on a Sabbath day, and when he comes, there hee seeth the people going to Church, well, perhaps then he sets up his horse at the lane, and goes into the Church for a custome and for company sake, and when he is in the Church, he goes into a seat and sets down his staffe, and sits down and attends the Minister, and never thinks of any thing, well at last the Lord sends a light into his soule, and telleth him, thou art now riding about thy own worldly businesse, when thou shouldst be in sanctifying of my Sabbath: Itell thee my friend, thou art in a wrong way,

D d d 2

thou



thou takest a naughty course, thou dost wickedly, and if thou continuest and goest on in this course, thou wilt never come at heaven. And this the Lord doth on a sudden, when a man never so much as thought of any such matter. And after a man is thus enlightened, he will be ready to say, the truth is, heretofore I went to heare the word but for customes sake, but when I least dreamed of any such thing, it pleased the Lord, blessed be his name, to reveale such things unto mee, as I before never knew, he told mee that which sticketh upon mee to this present houre, he discovered that unto mee, which I hope I shall carry with me unto my grave; this is that we may observe in the 9. of the *Acts*, *Paul* there was running on in a resolute course, he had gotten letters at *Damascus*, and purposed to make havock of all poore Christians where he came, now while he was in his journey the Lord met him from heaven, and cryed unto him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou mee?* as he if had said, this is not the way to heaven, you think to persecute my poore Saints, but *Saul, Saul*, I tell thee, this is not the way, thou takest a wrong course: he called unto him, as a man would call after one that is running out of his right way, into some wilderness or dangerous place. And when *Saul* heard this, he presently fell off his horse, and humbled himselfe and said, *Lord what wilt thou that I do?* and so *Luke 15.4.* the text saith, that the shepherd that had lost his sheep left his ninty and nine, and went into the wilderness to seek

seek that which was lost, and if he had not gone to seek the sheep, the sheep would never have sought him: alas the poore sheep was gone astray, and bewilderd, and if the shepheard had not followed it and sought after it, that would never have found the shepheard; nay to go further, many a man goeth to the word, and heareth it for nothing else but to carp at the Minister, and yet the Lord hath caught many such men also, and hath put such a light into their hearts, that he hath made them know that they were in a wrong way: and mark, when the Lord hath let in this light, then the soule begins to be at a stand, and thinks with himselfe, surely if this be the right way, I am in the wrong, if the Minister saith true, then I am not right; but then sometimes the heart would put out this light, it would not be informed and perswaded; if the Minister tels a man that he must sanctifie Gods Sabboths here, or else he shall never sanctifie a Sabboth unto him in heaven hereafter, when the Minister saith, that unlesse God humble us here, he will break us in peeces in hell hereafter; loath a man is to know this, and be informed of this, because hee would not be offended by this and provoked to performe this, but though a sinner would shift off this, yet the Lord will not leave him, but will still pursue him and lay reasons upon him unanswerable; the soule would faine play tricks with the Lord in this case, and put out this light, but God will reveale to the soule of a sinner that these things are certainly true, God will

D d d 3



will lay hold upon the understanding of a poore sinner, and follow him with reasons that are undeniable untill his reason shall yeeld, and his understanding give verdit to that which the Lord reveales, untill hee sayes I, confesse Lord, it is true, I yeeld full assent thereto: Thus the Lord knocketh at the doore or heart of a poore sinner, and not only so, but lifts up the latch and opens the doore of a mans heart, and letteth in the light; and this is the first course that God useth. The second is this, after that the Lord hath thus enlightened the minde and let in the light of his spirit into the heart of a sinner, and though a man would defeat the power of it, yet God still followeth him with forceable arguments untill the understanding is settled, and reason answered: after the Lord hath done this, then the second cord wherewith God draweth sinners unto himselfe, is a cord of mercy, whereby the Lord doth compasse a poore sinner about with kindnesse, & goodnesse, and compassion, *Hos. xi. 4.* there saith the Lord, *I taught Ephraim to goe, taking them by the armes, I drew them with the cords of love, and with the bonds of a man.* This same cord of Gods mercy is a cable rope, the abundant riches of Gods mercy is a great thick cable, and we will tell you of what it is twisted, & it makes known it selfe in foure particulars; if the illumination that God sends into the heart will not bee able to perswade the heart, though it answers all objections & pursueth it with arguments undeniable, why then the Lord will draw us with the cord of his mercy, and

and this great cable of Gods goodnesse is made up of foure cords.

First, the Lord revealed himselfe to be ready to receive, and willing and easie to entertayne poore sinners when they come unto him, *Esay 55.7.* there saith the text, *let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him returne unto the Lord and hee will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* The word in the original is this, the Lord multiplyeth pardons, the Lord hath not uttered all his pardons; the Popes pardons indeed may bee all sold, but Gods pardons are not at the bottome; no, no, hee hath a multitude of pardons. The Lord is ready to give thee pardon for all thy transgressions, what ever thy corruptions bee, whatsoever thy abominations be, the Lord standeth to multiply mercy and pardon, and forgivenesse, that so thou mayest have mercy for all, and forgivenesse to all thy finnes and distempers: hast thou multiplyed rebellion? why the Lord doth also multiply pardons, the bowels of compassion are still open, and the armes of mercy are still spread abroad, and when the soule seeth the attributes of God in Scripture, that hee pardons all poore sinners that come unto him; *Manasses*, he was humbled, and resolute *Paul*, hee was converted; when the soule seeth this, then the soule thinketh, why not I Lord, why not I pardoned also? why yes, thou mayst bee received to mercy and pardoned also, for the Lord doth still multiply pardons: *Manasses* had some mercy, and *Paul*

First Cord.



*Paul* had some, and yet there is mercy for thee also, and for a thousand thousand more; the Lord is ready to pardon poore sinners, and willing to entertaine them.

*Second  
Cord.*

Secondly, the Lord is not onely ready to forgive when men will come unto him, but hee doth also call and command them for to come, for the poore sinner when he heares this, that God is mercifull and ready to forgive, he may bee amazed and at a stand, and thinkes with himselfe, oh but may I, shall I, dare I goe unto the Lord for mercy, may I be so bold to presse in for favour at the hands of the Lord? it is the Lord indeed that sheweth mercy, but may I come unto the Lord? I have beene a gievous sinner, and have heaped abomination upon abomination, and therefore I am affraid to approach neere unto the presence of the Lord: why I tell thee thou mayest come, and the Lord willet and commandeth thee to come upon the penalty of his everlasting wrath, hee chargeth thee to come unto him, and entertayne that favour hee hath provided for thee, in the 3. of *Ier.* 22. there sayth the Lord, *come unto me ye rebellious people, and I will heale your rebellions*: you that never prayed, nor never came to heare, all rebells come unto me and I will heale your rebellions, and then the people answer, *behold we come unto thee, for thou art our God*: be not so full of nicenesse in this case, do not stagger and say, I have despised Gods goodnesse, and slighted Gods mercies, and therefore may I be bold to come? why I tell you, you may

may goe to God for mercy, *come to me ye rebellious people, and I will heale your rebellions*; mercy will answer all your sinnes, they shall bee no impediment unto you; in the 3. of *Ier. 1.* it is a fine passage, there saith the text, *They say, that if a man put away his wife and shee goe from him, and shee become another mans, will he receive her againe?* but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet returne againe to me, saith the Lord: if a man should put away his wife for an adulteresse, would hee take her againe, no certainly; all the world will say, an adulteresse whore, away with her; after so many injuries & wrongs done unto her husband, there is no expectation of mercy or kindnesse from him; but the Lord saith, *thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet returne unto me*: whatsoever we delight in more, or love more than God, they are our lovers; now the Lord saith, though thou hast had pride, and covetousnesse, and malice, & drunkennesse, and adultery for thy lovers, yet returne unto me, notwithstanding all thy base doings and wicked practises, yet come unto me, saith the Lord: this is great encouragement to a poore sinner, that all his sinfull abominations should not hinder him from receiving mercy; this workes wonderfully upon the soule of a sinner, and he begins to wonder and say, Lord, shall all my sinnes bee pardoned, shall all those oathes, and all that prophanenesse of mine be forgiven, after so many mercies slighted, and so many abominations committed, yet forgiven? why aye, saith the Lord, come unto me, and you shall



be forgiven; thou hast played the harlot, yet come unto me thou proud heart and bee humbled, come unto me thou stout stubborne sturdy heart and be softened, come unto me yet for all this thou covetous heart and be sanctified; and this is the second cord of this cable of mercy, the Lord doth not only reveale unto the soule of a sinfull creature, that if he doth come unto him he shall be accepted, but hee commands him to come and receive mercy from him.

*Third  
Cord.*

Thirdly, the Lord doth not only command a poore sinner to come unto him, but, to go further, it is marvellous strange to consider, when a sinner in the sight of his unworthinesse is hardly brought to goe to the Lord for mercy, but sayes, it is true, there is a great deale of mercy with God, but not for me; when a sinner, thus goeth away from God and flyeth from mercy, the Lord followeth him still, and sendeth another cord after him, and pursueth him with mercy and kindnesse, that so if it were possible he might winne him and wooe him to receive mercy and forgivenesse. It is almost impossible to conceive the wonderfull goodnesse of the Lord in this kind; he doth not only command poore sinners to come unto him, but hee entreates and beseeches them to come and receive mercy: and this one would think should move the hardest heart under heaven; 2 Cor. 5. 20. there saith the Apostle, *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead, be you reconciled unto God: the matter here wee see*

is past all question, the Lord doth not only command you to come, but rather then you shall goe away, hee will beseech you to come and take the mercy that the Lord offereth to you, and you have so much need of mercy will come and kneele down before you and beseech you and intreat you for the Lord Iesus sake to pittie your poore soules, and receive pardon for your sinnes, to receive sanctification and justification here, that you may be blessed and glorified for ever hereafter; this is that which a sinner is not able to comprehend, but he begins to be at a stand and at amazement. It is a great matter that God should command a sinner for to come unto him; and that he should be accepted when he doth come, but that God should beseech and intreat a poore sinner to receive mercy, herein is discovered the incomprehensible depth of Gods love, that the Lord should beseech us; oh that you would receive pardon for your sinnes and bee blessed for ever; why this is wonderfull mercy, and admirable goodnesse! if this Cord will not draw a man, what will do it? this makes a poore soule to stand agast, and amazed, and say, good Lord is this possible that the great King of Heaven should come and beseech such a traytor, such a rebell as I am to take pardon? if the King of *England* should proclaim a pardon to some notorious Traytor that had plotted some dangerous treason against his person, this were much; but that the King should lay downe his Crowne and come creeping to him, and beseech him upon his knees to take mercy, and not



to be punished, why this is a thing beyond all expectation, no man will do this, no man should doe this: but when the soule shall thinke, what a King intreat a Traytor, a Rebelle; a Conquerer intreat a slave to take mercy; what shall heaven stoop to earth, shall majesty stoope to misery; shall the great God of heaven and earth that might have condemned my soule, that is a God holy and just, and if I had perished and beene damned, might have tooke glory by my destruction; is it possible, is it credible that this God should not only entertayne me when I come, and command me for to come, but intreat, and beseech me to come and receive mercy from him; oh the depth of the incomprehensible love of God! imagine you saw God the Father intreating you, and God the Sonne beseeching you, as he doth this day; come now and forsake your finnes and take mercy which is prepared for you, and shall bee bestowed upon you; would not this make a soule think thus with it selfe, what for a rebelle, not only to have mercy offered, but to bee intreated to receive mercy and pardon; why then if I will not take it, it were pittie but I should goe to hell and be damned for ever: nay I tell you, this mercy, one day, if you refuse it, will plunge you into the bottomlesse pit of hell; I tell you, you were better heare ten Sermons of judgement than one of mercy, if you do not take the same when it is offered. The Lord hee complaineth, *why will ye die, as I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of a sinner*: the Lord takes an oath upon it, that he do.

fires not the death of a sinner, and calls after sinners, turne ye, turne ye, why will ye die ye sinfull sonnes of men? Mercy is offered you, the Lord Iesus reacheth out his hand to you to pluck the drunkard out of the alehouse, and the adulterer out of the company of his whore; I tell you, you had beene better have beene at the East-Indies where you might never have heard of mercy, than slight it when it is offered: if you do break this cord, I know not what to say unto you, this is able to breake a mountaine in peeces, *shake O mountaines*, saith the Psalmist, why, *because God hath redeemed Jacob*; the redemption of *Jacob* was enough to shake a mountaine: when thou hast been a great sinner, and heaped up transgression upon transgression, and drunk in iniquity like water, why yet after all this the Lord offereth mercy unto thee, and beseecheth thee to receive it; I tell thee, if thou wilt not have mercy now, it is pittie, but thou shouldest goe to the Devill, and if thou dost goe to hell, then thank thy selfe, it was thy owne fault; thou mightest have had mercy and wouldest not: and this is the third cord of Gods mercy, he intreats a poore sinner to come unto him and receive mercy from him: but if the soule bee yet awke and untoward and will not come, but say, if mercy be so free, then we will let it alone a while, and take it hereafter; if God bee so carefull of us, then wee will bee a little carelesse our selves: why then there remaines but one cord more, and if thou breakest this, thou art in a miserable condition, and that is this:



Fourth  
Cord.

The Lord doth wait and stay in long patience & suffering, to see if at any time a sinner will turne unto him : our Saviour followes poore sinners from Alehouse to Alehouse, and sayes, I beseech you, you drunkards take mercy, and have your sinnes pardoned; the Lord tyres himselfe so, and wearieeth himselfe with waiting one day after another, and one weeke after another; it may bee this day, this weeke, this Sabbath, this Sermon a sinner will turne unto me, what will it never be, why are you not ashamed that the Lord Iesus should thus wayt your leisure, and follow you from house to house, and into the field; nay that Christ should every morning appeare unto your understanding, and every night come to your bed-side and say, let this bee the last night of sinning, and the next day the first day of your repenting; oh when will you be humbled, when will you receive mercy that it may goe well with you and yours for ever; why for shame if none of all the other will move you, yet let this cord draw you unto the Lord: this is the last cord of Gods mercy, he stayeth our leisure; the Lord will not wait alwaies, but hee waiteth a long time for our amendment; hee stayed above a hundred yeares for the old world: *Ier. 13. 27.* there God taketh upon him the person of a travelling woman, *oh Ierusalem, wilt thou not bee made cleane, oh when will it once bee?* a woman that is in travell, and oppressed with paine, oh how she expects and longs for her delivery, when the throb comes, then she cryes, when

when will deliverance come, and then the throb comes the second time, and then the cryes, would death would come so deliverance would come, and thus her heart breaks almost with waiting in this kind, for the birth of the child which is to be delivered; God the father doth take upon him, the person of a travelling woman, he is travelling even unto death, untill he can bring forth his first borne, untill some soule be converted and brought home unto him; *oh ierusalem wilt thou not be cleane, oh when will it once be?* I have wayted one yeare, ten yeare, twenty yeare, forty yeare, why when will it once be? if a woman should be in travell forty yeares, she would be accounted the wonder of the world, nay it were impossible she should endure so long, but the Lord hath travelled twenty yeares, yea forty for the birth of poore sinners; and how many throbs, think wee, hath the Lord endured in this time, saying, *oh geemen of England,* will you never be cleane? when will it once be? the Lord thus travels in patience, looking when we will receive mercy, oh when will it once be, will it never be that those prond hearts will be humbled, will it never be that those stubborn hearts will be softened, will it never be that those unregenerate hearts will be sanctified, will it never be that those prophane hearts will be pure and holy, why when will it once be? thus Christ wayteth still, and expecteth still, if not this day, then the next week, if not the next week, then the next moneth, if not the next moneth, then the next quarter,



quarter, if not the next quarter, then the next  
yeare, if not the next yeare, then the next score  
of yeares: you old sinners that are grayheaded in  
wickednesse, how long hath the Lord waited up-  
on you, for shame let him wayt no longer, but  
turn unto him, that you may receive mercy from  
him, and have your sinnes pardoned by him. This is  
the last cord of Gods mercy; first, the Lord will  
entertaine poore sinners if they come; secondly, he  
doth command them to come; thirdly, he doth in-  
treat and beseech them to come; and lastly, if all  
this will not do, then he wayts in patience for their  
amendment: and thus the Lord makes up his great  
cable roap of mercy; and this, one would think,  
should melt the hardest heart under the Sunne: but  
if this will not do, if God by these cords of mer-  
cy cannot draw a sinner, then he takes himselfe  
unto another course, and as he justly, may he lets  
in other cords in the heart: you will not come  
with mercy, will you? very well, I tell you, the  
Lord will lay hooks upon you, that shall bring you  
with a witnesse; if these bonds of love will not pre-  
vayle with you, the Lord hath iron cords that  
will pluck you in peeces; and therefore the  
third meanes whereby God draweth a sinner from  
corruption to himselfe, is the cord of conscience,  
which God lets down into the soule, and this  
same yron cord, this yron chayne of conscience  
hath three hookes at the end of it, which are able to  
rend the heart of a sinner, and pluck it in peeces, and  
draw the soule unto God; if the cords of Gods mercy  
will

will not draw you, then these yron hookes of conscience will pull you to the Lord; for this same cord of conscience hath three maine hookes, that is, there are three great works of conscience which God useth to work upon men to draw them from sinne to himselfe. First, conscience is a warner of the soule, and admonisheth the sinner of his waies; this conscience gives a sinner an uncontrouleable command to come from sinne, conscience gives him a peremptory charge upon paine of the heaviest judgement that can bee inflicted upon him, not to meddle with corruption; it is conscience that doth this, the Lord stirreth up conscience and armes him with authority as a Vicegerent under him, that he may stifle those sinfull lusts, and overpower those sinfull distempers that harbour in the soule, and overcome the soule: it is true, that wicked men by reason that they live in sinne, have their consciences either blinded or asleep, their consciences oftentimes come to be seared and hardened; wicked men have their consciences sometimes under them, they stifle their conscience and stop the mouth of conscience; if conscience offer to reprove them, they presently take him on the mouth, and make him quiet; they bind the hands of conscience in this kind, but if a wicked man belong to God, then hee will awaken conscience in this life, but if they do not belong unto him, then they may be sure when they are in hell to have their consciences awakened, they carry a black dogge in their bosome that will teare them with a



witnesse, but if God purpose good unto a man, then he will awaken his conscience in this life, hee will arme conscience with authority, and put a new commission into the hand of conscience, insomuch, that now conscience stands upon termes, and conscience will not put it up as he hath done; howsoever it hath heretofore bene stifled, yet now it gives men a peremptory command upon paine of their everlasting torment, as they love their own soules, to take heed that they meddle not with sin, for if they do, it will cost them everlasting life: now when conscience hath such a commanding power, then the command is marvellous awfull, terrible, and fearefull, and it makes a sinner start aside and withdraw himselfe from his former courses, it makes him hang downe his head, and he dares not looke out of doores, he dares not runne with that courage into wicked practises as he did before: it is with conscience in this case as it is with a Lievetenant or a Shreife of a countrey, happily in the Kings absence a company of rebels joyne together in a conspiracy and rend the commission out of the Lievetenants hand, and beset the Shreifes house; & the officers, because the rebels are more in number, dare doe little or nothing unto them, they may say as *David* did to the sonnes of *Serviah*, *ye are too strong for me, ye sonnes of Serviah*; and therefore he would not meddle with them: and so in some unruly towne wee shall see a company of ryotous fellowes, because they are more in number than the officers, they set the Constable in stockes, when

as they are more worthy to goe to the gallows than he to the stocks: just so it is with conscience, haply wicked men in former times have stifled conscience, and tooke the comission out of the hands of conscience; but when the King comes into the countrey, and the officers shall complaine unto the King of this conspiracy, then he gives them a larger command, and gives them more power, hee puts a new comission into their hands, and furnisheth them with greater ayd, and commandeth upon paine of death that there be no more such uproares made; and when this is proclaymed upon the Market-post, then this makes those resolute fellows to pull in their heads, and they dare not shew themselves: So it is with conscience, sometimes the Lord letts wicked men blind conscience, and feare it; wicked men oftentimes make a mock at conscience, if a man reprovees them for some<sup>o</sup> sin, and admonisheth them for conscience sake not to comit wicked practises, then they flout at the person that speakes unto them, and say, what your conscience will not suffer you to do as we do, you will not drink will you? why? oh your conscience will not suffer you; you will not commit adultery will you? your conscience will not suffer you; what you are a man of conscience are you, and you will suffer your conscience to make a foole of you? what care we for your conscience, or you either: thus many sinners keep conscience under, but howsoever conscience be thus slighted and dispised, the time will come when God will awaken conscience,



and put a new commission into his hands, and sends him help from heaven, and sayes, goe to such a man and tell him, you have blasphemed, and you have spoken against Gods Saints, you have broken Gods Sabbaths, and slighted Gods word, and contemned Gods ordinances, and neglected the meanes of salvation; be it known therefore unto thee, that I have a command from heaven and from God, I charge you as you will answer it at the dreadfull day of judgement, take heed of those evils and sinfull practises that heretofore you have committed, lest you damne your soules for ever: and you must know that conscience comes not without a commission, but he hath a commission in his pocket and he shewes it also; *Pro. 29. 1. there is one part of conscience's commission, there saith the text, he that being often reprovved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*; if you be often reprovved & will not be bettered nor informed, then the Lord sayes, & conscience frō the Lord tells you, be it at your own perill, ye shall surely perish, & that without remedy; and in the 2. of the *Theff. 3. 14. there is another part of his commission, if any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*: hee that will not obey the Gospel, he that will not stoope thereto, nor be framed thereby, why conscience he shewes his commission, and charges men to take heed of this, & the God of heaven will take the part of conscience, and will come in flaming fire to render vengeance to that soule that will not obey the

the Gospel: But you will say, cannot a man shift and free himselfe from the terrour of conscience? I answer no, conscience hath now a great deale of ayd from heaven; because he hath been in former times so badly dealt withall, therefore he will go no more so slenderly garded; *Deut. 29. 19.* there saith the text, *If it come to passe, that hee that heareth the words of this curse, shall blesse himselfe in his heart and say, I shall have peace, though I walke in the imagination of my heart, to adde drunkennesse to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousie shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book, shall lie upon him, & the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven:* and therefore you that say, conscience may command what he pleaseth, yet you will do what you list, and though you adde drunkennesse unto thirst, yet you shall have peace, and it shall go well with you: I tell you, the wrath of the Lord shall smok against your soules, & he shal blot your names out of the book of life, the wrath of the Lord shall follow thee into all places, and upon all occasions, whatever thou dost, or whithersoever thou goest, the wrath of God shall follow thee; Gods wrath shall follow thee to the Ale-house, and the Brothel-house, and to the Taverne; God shall follow thee and pluck thee out to thy shame here, & to thy confusion hereafter: and this is the first work of conscience. He hath been snubbed in former times, and no man cared for him, but now he is awakened and backt with power from the Lord, and gives a peremptory command to the



soule of a sinner; bee it at your owne perill if you  
 meddle with sinne; and this makes sinnefull wret-  
 ches lie snugge for a while; they dare not shew  
 themselves, but shut themselves under hatches;  
 conscience perkes then upon the crowne, and this  
 makes them hang the wing a little, and withdraw  
 themselves from their base courses, and abstaine  
 from the Ale-house awhile; but now when wicked  
 persons see that their companion is gone, and that  
 they have lost one of their company, they make af-  
 ter him a maine; and then conscience plucks one  
 way, and they pluck another way; they lay siege  
 to the soule of a poore sinner, conscience bids him  
 look to himselfe, and take heed what he doth; per-  
 haps conscience sees him halfe perswaded to yeeld  
 to his old companions, and then conscience hath an  
 eye to him, and biddeth him take heed unto him-  
 selfe, and saies; I command and charge you as you  
 will answer it at the dreadfull day of Iudgement  
 before the Tribunall seat of God, that you runne  
 not into your former wicked courses; but then his  
 cursed companions they draw backward, and come  
 unto him and say, what is the reason that now you  
 begin to sever your selfe from us? he tells them, his  
 conscience hath troubled him, and he heard the  
 Word of God, he heard the commission of consci-  
 ence read; that whosoever was often reprov'd and  
 not bettered thereby, should perish, and that hee  
 which obeyed not the Gospell, should be accur-  
 sed; and this makes him do as he doth: when his  
 companions heare this, they begin to blind his  
 judge-

judgement as much as they can, and take off the command of conscience; you have heard, say they, many threatnings from God, and conscience hath told you, that you shall perish and be damned if you continue in your old courses; but threatened men live long, these words break no bones, and this breath blowes no corn; there have been many so threatened, and yet never felt any of those judgements, but have lived a merry life to this day, and are the bravest fellows and the boonest companions in the whole countrey; and thus by carnall company and cursed perswasions the soule is drawn back againe to his former wicked course, and so haply this hooke is broken and the sinner is gone; but when conscience sees this, that his first hooke is broken, and that his command is slighted, he follows fast after him, and layeth another hooke upon him; and as before hee was a commander over him, so now he comes to be an accuser of him, and a witnesse against him, he accuseth him before God, and is a witnesse against him, because he hath committed those sinnes which he upon paine of Gods everlasting displeasure and his owne everlasting damnation commanded and charged him he should not commit; conscience before was only Gods Herald to tell him what God commanded, but now conscience is become a Pursevant and a Sergeant to arrest him: and therefore 2 Sam. 24. 10. *David's heart smote him after hee had numbered the people,* conscience hee flung his actions upon him; know how ever a man may avoid the warning of conscience



ence, and break the command of conscience, yet he cannot avoid the horror and stroke of conscience, but conscience will smite him and sling this hooke into the very heart of him; and conscience will smite the heart so much the more heavily, because his former commands were despised: look as it was with *Gideon*, *Jdg. 8. 5.* when he was pursuing after the *Midianites*, he came unto the men of *Succoth* and prayed for aide of them, he intreated them to help him, and joyne sides with him, but they refused and scorned him, and said; *Are Zeba and Zalumna now in thy hands, that wee should give bread unto thine army;* as if they had said, art thou a commander over them, art thou sure to overcome them; no, no, wee will not helpe thee: Marke now what answer *Gideon* makes these men of *Succoth* in the 7th. verse, *well saith hee, When the Lord hath delivered Zeba and Zalumna into mine hands, then I will tear your flesh with thornes of the wildernesse, and with bryers;* and in the 16. verse after the Lord had delivered those men into his hands, he did unto them of *Succoth*, according as he had threatned; *He took the Elders of the City, and thornes of the wildernesse, and bryers; and with them he did tear the men of Succoth,* saith the Text: Iust so is it with conscience, conscience before only commanded, and perswaded men, but because he hath beene slighted and despised by them, because they have flouted him, and said; what must I be a servant to my conscience, must I be a slave and a foole to my conscience,

no,

no, no; I will do what I list for all conscience: will you so saith conscience, well, when God giveth mee authority, and gives mee a commission, I will teare your flesh for this, and rend your hearts in peeces with horror, and then conscience he surpriseth a sinner, upon every occasion in this case he bursts into the Alehouse, and into the Tavern upon him like a Segeant, and arrests him, he follows him to the alehouse, he persweth him home, he takes him in his bed and arrests him in his sleep; and when he is in bed and asleep, then conscience awakens him and terrifies him, and hales the soule before the Tribunall seat of God, and saith, loe Lord, behold this man, this is the drunkard, this is the adulterer, this is the blasphemers that sweares by thy name, prophanes thy Sabbath, and contemnes thy word: this is he Lord, that is an enemy to thy servants, and a hater of thy truth and a despiser of thy ordinances, this is he Lord, this is he that hath done these things, and committed these abominations, this is he that hath committed many sinnes in secret, when no eye saw him, this is so Lord, at such a time, and in such a place, in such a chamber, with such a company, then this man blasphemed thy name and despised thy truth, and rayled on good men, this, this Lord is the man; and when conscience hath thus dragged him before God, and witnessed against him, then, take him Iaylor, take him divell, saith the Lord, and imprison him, let vexation, and horror, and trouble, and anguish lie upon his soule, saith God, untill he confesse his

Ggg sinnes



finnes and resolve to forsake them; now this  
 this book sticketh fast in the very heart of this man,  
 and all his friends and companions are not able to  
 baile him, one commeth, and another commeth,  
 and all speak and ask him, what is the reason, what is  
 the cause, why are you thus discontented, and why  
 thus disquieted? oh saith the poore soule, you see  
 not, you know not, you conceive not, the horror  
 that conscience hath layed upon mee, and what  
 heavy wrath and fearefull vengeance God hath  
 threatned to inflict upon mee for my finnes; now  
 when his companions heare this, they cannot all  
 of them bayle him, but unlesse he will see his base  
 courses, and confesse his finnes, and be humbled  
 for them and resolve to forsake them; conscience  
 will not be at quiet, but will continually torment  
 and perplex him with horror, thus the Lord deals  
 with the Prophet David as we may see, *Psal. 32. when  
 I kept silence, sayth he, my bones waxed old through  
 my roaring all the day long, for day and night thy  
 hand was heavy upon mee, my moisture is turned in-  
 to the draught of Summer, I acknowledged my sinne  
 unto thee, and mine iniquitie have I not hid, I con-  
 fessed my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou for-  
 givest the iniquitie of my sinne.* David he folded up  
 his finnes at first, he would not come off cleverly,  
 he would not take them to himselfe, and say, I have  
 committed adultery, and I have murdered *Nish,*  
 and therefore his bones were consumed, and he  
 reared continually, when the Lord had him upon  
 the rack, he made him roare againe, and would ne-

ver leave tormenting of him, untill he had confessed his finnes, but after he had confessed them, then he forgave his iniquitie, the Lord dealeth with the soule in this case, as a King doth with a Traytor after his conspiracy is discovered, and he attached, if he will not confesse his conspiracy, and who were his fellow traytors, then he is brought upon the rack, and then one joynt is broken, and then he roares againe by reason of the extremity of the payne, why confesse then saith the King; and if he will not confesse the whole conspiracy, but onely some circumstances of it, then he is hoyled upon the rack the second time, and then another joynt is broken, and then he roars againe, why confesse more yet then saith the King, and never leaves racking and tormenting of him, untill he hath discovered and layed open the whole treason: so conscience will bring the soule of a sinner unto the rack, and make him confesse his finnes and come out of it selfe, and then the drunkard he cryes out, Oh the abominations that I have committed, which the Sonne never saw, in such a place, at such a time, I rayled upon Gods servants and blasphemed Gods name, I prophaned Gods Sabbath and contemned his ordinance, but conscience will make him confesse more yet, and therefore forceth him to the rack againe, and then he cryes and roares for anguish of spirit, and confesses all, and resolves to amend, he purpurposes to pray, and heare, and sanctifie Gods Sabbath, and lead a new life, and now a con-



ence upon the confession of his sinnes, and purpose of amendment, receives some satisfaction, and then it beginnes to be at quiet, and give him some rest, and this is the second hooke of conscience. But when the poore sinner hath gotten some quiet by his confessing of his sinnes, and resolving to forsake them, when his companions see that he is come out of that horror, and vexation wherein he was, and that he puts his head out of doores, and is creeping abroad, then they set upon him againe, and labour with might and mayne by wicked perswasions, and cursed devices to draw him to his old courses, they knew there was no medling with him before, but now conscience is a little quieted, and he a little eased, then all the drunkards in the towne pursue him, and all the loose mates hang about him, and lay hookes upon him of love and entertainment, and marke how they reply upon him: Why refresh, say they, your soule with some of your ancient dalliance, you know wee have beene old friends, and of long acquaintance, and what contentment have wee had in our times? why, do not smoak out your dayes in melancholly, I dare warrant you the worst is past: it was only a fit of melancholly that perplexed you, and therefore now it is over refresh your selfe with your friends, and with those that love you. Thus the divell by temptations on one side, and wicked men by cursed perswasions on the other side, beleagure a poore soule; and the soule having some quiet, he begins to listen to their perswasions, and then he beginnes to

to take up his old course, and follow his sinnes more violently, and with greater eagernesse than ever he did all his life time before: For mark that alwayes, if after God hath inlightened a mans mind and awaked his conscience, he falls into his old wayes again, then he is a divell; he is twice as bad as he was before, he followes his corruptions with such outrageousnesse, as if hell were broken loose. Very well, he hath now broken two hooks, the third hook is that which will rend him in peeces before it will let him passe: when conscience seeth that the other two hooks are broken, when he seeth that commands prevaile not, that accusations terrifie not; then the Lord exerciseth another work of conscience upon the heart of a poore sinner, and that is this: As conscience did before command him, and peremptorily charge him upon the hazzard of everlasting life, not commit sinne; and secondly, as it before did accuse him before God, for the commission of that sinne, whereby God was dishonoured, and his soule polluted: so in the third place, conscience becomes his executioner, it takes the office of an executioner upon him, conscience will beare with him no longer, but now draggs him down to the very place of execution: he was convicted before; conscience sayes unto him, thy sinnes were discovered; and I charged thee not to meddle with sinne any more, upon paine of Gods displeasure, and as thou wouldst answer it before God: afterward I became an accuser of thee before God, and then thou didst confesse thy sinnes, and didst purpose



pose amendment, but now since thou hast slighted my commands, and not regarded my accusations, there is therefore no remedy but thou must go to the place of execution: now there is no way but one with thee, now conscience begins to condemne the soule; as Divines expresse these three works of conscience, by a practicall kind of reasoning, and conscience reasons thus with the soule. He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, he shall perish, there is no remedie; there is the command of conscience: but thou hast often been reprov'd and admonished, and yet hast hardened thy heart and hast not been bettered by it, there is the work of accusation, and therefore thou shalt perish, there is no remedy; and this is the condemning work. Suppose conscience should come thus unto the heart of a man, he that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his heart he shall perish, saith the Lord, there is no remedy: but now let conscience go into every mans bosome, and reason thus with him, thou art the man, woman, or child, whom counsells in private, and reproofes, exhortations, and admonitions in publique would do no good; nothing would convince thee, nothing would informe thee; therefore thou shalt perish, man, woman, or child, there is no remedie. These are the three works of conscience, and when conscience hath done this last work, and performed his office of execution, when he hath condemned a soule, and delivered a sinner into the hand of the executioner, then it is thus with this sinner: af-

rer all mercies and cords of love will do no good, after the commands and accusations will not prevaile, then conscience sayes, come damned ghosts, take away this drunkard, this blasphemers, this adulterer, this contemner of my word, and throw him headlong into the pit of everlasting destruction; he would not be amended, let him be condemned; he would not be humbled, let him therefore be damned: Thus conscience delivers a sinner into the hands of the jaylor, into the hands of the devell, and then he is amazed and thinks himselfe past hope, past help, past cure. This is that we shall observe in conscience; look as it with a debtor that liveth in prison, he was haply put in at first for some trifle; when he is once there, then all his creditors come in, and one layeth a hundred pound to him, and another a thousand pound, and then his case is irrecoverable, he is never like to come out againe: so when conscience hath arrested a man, and cast him into prison for his pride, or for his covetousnesse, or for his drunkennesse, or for his adulterie and the like; then mark, Mercy, and Goodnesse, and Patience, and Long-suffering come all in, and arrest him, and Mercy saith, at my sute for many hundreds; Grace, that saith, at my sute for many thousands; then Patience and Long-suffering comes and sayes, at my sute for many millions; and this is the wofullest plight of all. When conscience is thus tormenting a sinner, then patience comes and pleads against him, and mercy that sueth a bond against him. Mercy saith, Lord, I have been



beene wronged; then commeth grace and saith,  
 Lord I have beene refused; then commeth pati-  
 ence and saith, Lord I have beene contemned; I  
 have besought him, saith mercy, to be reconciled  
 but I was slighted; I have waited for his amend-  
 ment, sayth patience, but I have not beene regar-  
 ded: I have beene offered, saith grace, but yet  
 have beene neglected: Lord, all thy cost and care  
 hath beene despised; they all come before the  
 Lord, and plead against the soule of a sinner, ju-  
 stice Lord, saith mercy, justice Lord, saith grace,  
 justice Lord, saith patience, wee have all beene  
 slighted, neglected, and contemned: and then the  
 Lord he condemnes him, and saith, take him di-  
 vell, and execute vengeance upon him, mercy was  
 offered but he refused, he would none of it, and  
 therefore mercy shall never be shewed unto him,  
 let him for ever be damned: And by this time the  
 soule perceives it selfe to be in the divells hands, as  
 it were, and in the divells possession, and that Sa-  
 tan may torment him as he please: and then the  
 soule being thus perplexed, he cryeth out, the di-  
 vell is there, do you not see him, he is come for  
 mee, and I shall go and must go with him: why,  
 since I must go to the divell, why let mee go then;  
 nay if the soule that is thus in the jawes of the  
 divell, lie upon his death bed, as soone as ever he  
 takes a little rest, the Lord terrifieth and affright-  
 eth him in his dreames, and then he riseth out of  
 his bed, and the first word hee speaks is this, I  
 must go, and I will go: then his friends that attend  
 about

about him, ask him whither he will go: they tell him he is among his friends, then he saith, I am damned, and I am going to hell, and therefore let mee go; the divell is comming to fetch mee, and therefore I must be gone. I beseech you consider this, you that make nothing of conscience, if it once lay hold on you with this hook, it will hold you sure enough, and reare your very hearts in peeces: Now when the Minister is sent for to come unto a poore soule in this miserable condition, when he comes haply he tells him, there is a great deale of mercy and comfort with the Lord, there is a great deale of grace and salvation with Christ; but then the sinner, when he heares of mercy, is distracted and besides himselfe, and sayes, that is my plague, that is my bane, and that in the end will be my damnation; if I had never heard of mercy, if I had not lived under the Gospell, and the meanes of salvation, oh then I had been a happy man in comparison, alas it is mercy that I have neglected, it is the glad tidings of salvation which I have contemned, how shall I then be saved; if the meanes of salvation have thus been slighted by mee; if I had never opposed grace, grace might now have helped mee; if I had not despised mercy, mercy might now have succourd mee; but this is my plague, this is my woe, all the kindnesse that God shewed to mee, and all the mercy that God hath revealed and offered, I have despised and refused: many a knock hath God given at my heart, and many a rap at my soule, the Lord hath even wept over mee

H h h

mee



mee as he did over Ierusalem, oh that thou hadst  
 known the things belonging to thy peace : the  
 Lord came kindly and wooed mee lovingly ; oh the  
 perswasions of the Lord, and commands of consci-  
 ence that I have had, and yet after all perswasions and  
 horror, and commands, what yet proud still ? what  
 yet covetous still ? and prophane still ? why then  
 surely there is no mercy to be looked for, no grace  
 to be expected, and therefore certainly to hell I  
 must go, and then he riseth and will be gone to  
 hell ; all that are about him cannot hold him : but  
 then the Minister haply further replies, the truth of  
 it is, you have done thus ; but do you think so still ?  
 would you do so still, if you were out of this per-  
 plexity ? is it good now to be drunk ? is it good now  
 to commit adultery ? is it good now to blaspheme ?  
 is it good now to contemne Gods ordinances ?  
 would you now rayle on Gods Saints, and despise  
 Gods truth, & prophane Gods Sabbaths ? would you  
 now do these things ? oh no, no, saith he, I now find  
 what the end of those wretched courses will be, the  
 word of God could not prevayle with me, the Mi-  
 nister could not perswade me, & therefore now I  
 shal perish, I shal be damned for these abominations  
 which I have committed, there is no remedy ; if ever  
 man shal be damned, it is I ; if ever man go downe  
 to hell, surely it is I ; nay, hell is too good for  
 mee ; oh the good Sermons that I have heard, the  
 Minister hath spoken home oftentimes to my con-  
 science, the very flames of hell have been flashed  
 in my face, the Minister would often have spent  
 his

his blood that he might doe good to my poore soule, and yet I despised the word, and scorned the Minister, and mocked those whom conscience vexed, saying: What, you are a man of conscience are you? you dare not sinne, your conscience will not suffer you? what are you such a foole to be ruled by your conscience? and therefore God hath justly let my conscience loose upon me, now I know to my woe that I have a conscience, the worme that never dieth gnaweth my heart, and rends and plucks my soule in peeces: woe, woe be unto mee, that ever I sousted my conscience, that ever I put out the light of conscience, for therefore is it that my conscience is now thus tearing of my heart, and terrifying of my soule, here; and therefore it is that I shall for ever perish hereafter. But then the Minister he replyes, yet further; aye, the truth is, you have done thus, but you will not yet forsake your sinnes, and abandon your corruptions? will you still be drunk and riotous? will you still be proud? will you still swear and curse and blaspheme? if you will part with these sins, and take mercy in stead of these, why yet there is hope. Then the poore soule cryes out, now the Lord for his merces sake remove these sinnes from mee; oh I never had so much delight in my sinnes heretofore, as now I have woe and misery and vexation for them: Why here is a cup for a drunkard indeed, here is a cup for a whore indeed, here is a cup for a blasphemer indeed, if every sinners cup were filled thus brim full of

H h h a

Gods



Gods wrath, never any man would take any joy in being drunk more, never would any man take any delight in chambring and wantonnesse more: but then the poore soule sayes further, oh but it is not in my power to help my soule, but if it will but please the Lord, to do good unto my poore soule, let him do what he will with it. What, saith the Minister, you are then willing and content to part with your sinnes: yes, yes, saith the poore soule, I will rather offend all the world than God, I had as leiffe go to hell as to the committing of any sinnefull practise; well saith the Minister, if it be so, it is well, but do you speak this from your heart; yes saith the poore soule, if it would please God to help me, I would forsake my sins with all my heart. Why now the poore soule is comming againe, and God is haling of him aside againe from his corruptions, and sinfull distempers. This is that we shall observe. Hos. 2, 6. there saith the text, *behold I will hedge up the way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her pathes, and she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them, & she shall seek them but she shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with mee then, than it is now.* The Lord at last teares the soule and rends the heart from sinfull distempers, and then the soule thinketh, oh there is not that pleasure in sinne, as I have formerly thought there was, the soule then hateth drunkennesse as death, he is not able to look upon his adulteresse queane, he is not able to abide the house where he committed the folly, & his heart begins

beginnes to tremble at it. And therefore mark the next and last cord: I should have added more to the former poynt out of *Psalm 38. 16.* there saith *David, thy fierce wrath is gone over mee, and thy terrors have cut mee off; thine arrowes stick fast in mee;* how ever *David* before had shook off the commands and accusations of conscience, though these would not draw him to God; yet now the Lords arrowes stuck fast in him, he could not pluck them out, nor cast them off for his life. The last cord is the cord of the Spirit, the Lord by the almighty power of his spirit, when the soule is thus loosened, he then fully plucks it to himselfe, never againe to be sodered and closed unto corruptions; with an almighty hand he cuts the soule off from sinne, and takes it into his own hand, that it may never be mustered by sinne, and Satan any more as it was formerly. Look as it is with a graft, a man must pluck it by force from one stock, before he can plant it upon another; so the Lord by the spirit of power doth rend the soule from sinne, and ingrafteth it into Christ, and now the soule purposeth never to commit any sinne againe, *John 16. 11.* there Christ saith, that he will send the spirit, the Comforter, and he shall reprove the world of righteousness, and of sinne, and of judgement: In that it is said, he will reprove the world of judgement, thereby is nothing else meant, but that the Lord will govern men; and why shall the comforter convince the world of judgement? because Satan is judged, saith the text; that is, he is kept off



and cannot pluck the soule to himselfe, the government that Satan had over the soule, is wholly removed, and Christ hath the soule under his command, and the soule is contented to be wholly at his disposing. In the time that Christ lived upon the earth, when the divells did possesse the bodies of men, the Lord saith unto them, I charge thee thou unclean spirit to come out; so the Lord saith now to the divell that hath taken possession of the soules of those men, which do belong to the election of grace; after the Lord hath rent a poore sinner from his corruptions, and haled him to himselfe, then he saith, come out of him Satan, and never rule him more, never take place in him more; and then he takes the soule into his hands, that he may governe him, and dispose of him according to his owne good will and pleasure. Thus we see the cords, whereby God draweth a sinner to himselfe. First he inlightens the mind; and reveales to the soule of a sinner, that he is in a wrong way, and that he must take another course if ever he meane to come at heaven, and then he lays the cords of mercy, and the cords of conscience upon him, whereby he constraines and forces him to come unto him, and the last is the cord of the Spirit, whereby he doth take the soule out of the hands of Satan, into his owne possession. The next thing to be considered, is, the reasons why the Lord by a holy kind of violence, thus drawes a sinner from corruption to himselfe; so the arguments are three. The first is taken from those steames whereby

*Reasons,  
or Arguments.*

whereby the Scripture discovereth this work of God, upon the soule of a sinner, *Matth. 12. 29.* there saith our Saviour, *No man cometh into a strong mans house, but first he overcomes, and binds the strong man before he takes possession of his house, and spoyle his goods:* this is the parable; the meaning is this, the house is nothing else but the heart of a sinner, the strong man is nothing else but sinne and Satan, the divell and sinne taking possession of, and ruling in the soule of a sinner; (and this is the wofull condition of many men, that think their penny good silver, and beare their heads aloft, howsoever they lift their heads so high, yet their soules are nothing else but habitations for the divell,) now Satan ruling, and overpowering the soule by sinne, is the strong man, that usurps authority over the soule, by reason of the corruptions that prevayle over the soule, (for if there were not sinne within the soules of men, there were no power that Satan could usurp over men:) now observe it, the Lord Iesus is the stronger man, and before he can come, and take possession of the soule, and work effectually in the soule, he must bind Satan, and take away the weapons of Satan, and then when he hath bound him, and overcome him, then he takes possession of the soule; this is the meaning of the parable: Now I reason thus, conquering, binding, and slaying, imply a kind of violence; Satan will not come out by intreaty, the devill must be commanded to go out, or else drawn out by a kind of violence: if all the  
Angells:



Angells in heaven, and all the men on earth should intreat Satan to come out of the soule, he would not come out, but this implyeth a holy kind of violence, that Christ offereth to corruptions in the soule, when he drawes the soule from sinne to himselfe. In another place it is said, that *Christ came to destroy the works of the diuell*, Ioh. 3. 8. those works are the sinfull corruptions, that were at first put into the soule by the delusion of Satan, when he tempted our first parents to eat of the forbidden fruit: Now Christ commeth to destroy those works, now the works of Satan will not destroy themselves, sinne and Satan will not bind and overcome themselves, the enemy will not come out of his hold willingly, but the work that must be put forth for the binding, conquering, and destroying of those, must needs imply a work of constraint, and holy violence which is offered. A man offers violence to his enemy when he binds him, a man offers violence to his enemy, when he overcomes him, a man offers violence to his enemy, when he slayes and destroyes him: such is the work of the Lord, when he takes possession of a soule this way, and this is the interpretation of Divines in this case: they say, that the Lord doth take away that deadnesse, and stupidity of heart, whereby it may lay hold on grace, if it resist not the good motions of the Spirit.

*The second Argument.* The second Argument is taken from the natural union betweene the soule and corruption, and then I reason thus: one contrary expells another, from

from a naturall subject, by constraint and compulsion; but the spirit, as a contrary, doth drive out sinne from the soule, in the work of preparation, as a contrary thereunto: and therefore must do it by constraynt and compulsion. Wee will open both the parts of the Argument; I say, one contrary driveth out another, by violence and constraynt; as for example, wheresoever heat is, if it commeth to drive out cold, it doth it by a certaine kind of violence, for the ground of all constraint, ariseth from the crossenesse and contrariety that things have one to another; wee need no constraint to to make things doe that which is naturall unto them, as to make fire hot, or a Lyon fierce, or a Wolfe ravenous; but he that will make a Lyon become a Lamb, and he that will make a wolfe become a Kidd, he that doth this, must offer a kind of violence to the nature of the Lyon, and of the Wolfe, and break the combination that is betweene the fiercenesse of the thing, and the thing it selfe; so that it is cleare, that one contrary driveth out another, from a naturall subject, by constraint and violence; and that sinne is naturally in a corrupt heart, is evident *Iob. 3. 6. whatsoever is born of the flesh, is flesh*; that is, whosoever commeth from *Adam*, is rooted in sinne: now mark, sinne being thus naturally in the soule, the Spirit of grace, and the Lord Iesus, when he commeth to drive away sinne from the soule, breaketh that neere union that is between sinne and the soule, by a holy kind of violence; *Gal. 6. 17. there saith the*



Apostle, *from henceforth let no man trouble mee, for I beare in my body the marks of the Lord Iesus*; the Lord Iesus breaking this naturall, and neere union, between sinne and the soule, must offer a kind of violence upon the soule, otherwise this union could not be parted. To speak punctually to every ones capacity, I appeale to any here present: is it not a violence, to pluck a branch from the tree, or an arme from the body? every man will say, you teare and pluck it: the arme naturally is knit to the body, and the branch naturally growes to the tree; our finnes are as arme to the body, and our corruptions as branches to the tree, therefore the Lord Iesus when he comes to pluck off these armes, and cut off those branches, must offer a kind of violence to the soule, before this union and combination, betweene sinne and the soule, will be parted and broken, this is the second reason, if there be such a naturall neere union, betweene sinne and a corrupt heart, then if God will pluck corruption from the soule, and sever this union, he must offer a kind of violence, but there is a naturall neere union, and league betweene sinne and the soule, and therefore the Lord must dissolve this league, and breake this union, by a kind of violence, and constraint.

*The third  
Argument.*

The third, and last argument is this: As in regard of that union that is betweene the soule and sinne, the soule must by a holy kind of violence, be drawn from sinne; so also in the second place, if wee

wee consider that soveraigne kind of power that sinne hath over the soule, and prevailerh within the soule, ( which kind of resistance and soveraign command must be drawne away, and removed from the soule,) we shall see that this cannot be done, unlesse there be an almighty hand, to work this, and offer a kind of conquering, and constraining violence upon the soule: in this case, the soveraigne rule that sinne doth exercise in the soule is such, that unlesse the Lord by his almighty hand, doth overpower this, there is no kind of prevailing, in the soule of a sinner in this case: now to shew how the Lord Iesus doth overpower the strength of sinne and corruption, observe it in two particulars, how the Lord Iesus is pleased miraculously, to overpower that rule which sinne hath over the soule; the first is this: The soule of a sinner being wholly possessed with, and defiled by corruptions, is so farre carried against God, that it doth nothing but resist against God; it is naturally so farre overwhelmed and possessed with sinne in every kind, that it doth nothing but resist; nay it can do nothing but resist the work of the spirit, it beateh back the work of the spirit, that it may not work upon it, nor take place in it, *Ier. 2. 31.* there saith the text, *Oh generation, see yee the word of the Lord, have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darknesse, wherefore say my people, we are Lords, we will come no more unto thee?* as who should say, do you think to rule us, or do you think that your commands shall take place with us, no no, our cor-



corruptions are our Lords; wee will come at you  
 no more, we will neither heare your words, nor  
 obey your commands in this kind. Secondly,  
 when the soule doth nothing but resist, when the  
 Lord would work upon the heart, when the soule  
 beareth back the work of the Spirit, and doth  
 nothing, nay can do nothing, but resist the Lord  
 Iesus, the Lord Iesus then takes away that stony  
 heart, he gives us a fleshy heart, whereby we may  
 lay hold on the meanes, and be fitted to receive  
 the good motions of the Spirit. There is an old  
 phrase, which Saint *Austin* propounded in his time,  
 and Divines take it up with one consent in this case,  
 and that is this, *that God of an unwilling will,*  
*doth make a willing will*; the word being truly in-  
 terpreted, I desire no more for the work in hand,  
 which implyeth a holy kind of violence, to be of-  
 fered thereunto, and expressed thereupon, before  
 the work can be brought to passe. For the open-  
 ing of the poynt, observe these particulars, in  
 the sentence before spoken of, that I may speak  
 punctually, and precisely; first, the soule of a man  
 naturally, is altogether unwilling to receive grace;  
 secondly, that the Lord doth bring willingnesse  
 out of this unwillingnesse, as light out of dark-  
 nesse; thirdly, that God must take away this un-  
 willingnesse, before he can bring willingnesse into  
 the soule; lastly (wherein lieth the strength of the  
 poynt) the Lord he only must do this; unwilling-  
 nesse will not destroy it selfe, the soule is altoge-  
 ther corrupt, corruption will not destroy it selfe,  
 and

and therefore there is nothing else in the soule of a sinner, but only the Almighty hand of God and his conquering power that must take away this unwillingness, and put willingness into the soule : The Text saith in the *Corinthians*, 2. *Cor.* 4.6. that *God bringeth light out of darkness*: how must he do this? why he must first destroy darkness, before he can bring light out of it : for one contrary cannot make up another, both remaining, but darkness must be destroyed before light can be brought forth : So it is with the soule, God brings willingness out of unwillingness ; first therefore he must destroy this unwillingness, he must destroy that darkness that is in the soule before he can bring willingness, and light to the soule; he must conquer that resistance against the Spirit which is in the soule, before he can make it plyable and frameable to his owne will and pleasure. It is a pretty passage, *Acts* 9. there *Paul* went into the field against Christ, and pitched a combat betweene Christ and him, he had gotten letters from the Synagogue of *Damascus*, and hee was resolutely bent to kill and slay all poore Christians : when he came, the Lord Iesus met him by the way, and there was a fight betweene the Lord and *Paul*, and in all reason he was resolved to fight against God, to try it out to the last ; now the Lord met him, and the battell was fought, and the Lord Christ overcame him, and what followeth, instead of fierce resisting the Lord, hee comes to submit himselfe humbly to the Lord, he doth not only put off the act of resisting, but the will of re-



sisting also, as we may see, vers. 6. there saith the text, *he trembling and astonished said, Lord what wilt thou have me for to doe?* Saul, Saul, *why persecutest thou me,* saith the Lord, *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* Why Lord, saith he, what wilt thou have me to do? Paul was not willing to take up his owne heart, for that was madd against the Lord, but he did submit himselfe and his will unto Christ. Briefly then to gather up the point: if it be so, that the Lord doth destroy and bind, and conquer Satan, if the Lord break that naturall union and combination that is betweene sinne and the soule, if it be so that the Lord by his almighty power and conquering hand doth overcome the power of sinne in the soule, then the Lord by a holy kind of violence doth pluck the soule from sinne, and draw it to himselfe; but all the former have beene prooved, it is sinne and Satan which God binds and overcomes, it is that neere union betweene sinne and the soule that God breaketh, it is the power that sinne hath over the soule that God doth conquer, God takes away not only the act, but the power of resisting from the soule, and therefore there must be some constraining power that must work this in the soule. We will now proceed to the use of this point.

Use 1.

In the first place it is a ground of instruction, to teach all people that heare this truth, to goe home and stand agast and amazed at the admirable unconceivable goodnesse of the Lord to a poore miserable, sinfull, damned creature; it had beene a great  
mercy

mercy if the Lord had only provided some meanes, and offered some meanes, and given salvation after many troubles and much seeking, but that the Lord should not only provide mercy and offer it, and reveale the truth, but that he should follow us and pursue us with the meanes of salvation when we never thought of it; nay that the Lord should follow us with mercy, and presse it upon us, when we refused it; that he should give us the freedome of his spirit to be delivered from our sinnes; when wee go into fetters, and go into prison, that the Lord should not only set open the doore for us that we might come out, but that he should by an almighty hand draw us out of the dungeon of our corruptions; this is mervellous mercy and admirable loving kindnesse: the truth of it is, men and Angells are not able to comprehend this, nay the Angells of Heaven desire to observe and wonder at this admirable goodnesse of the Lord, the passage is observable *Gen. 19. 16.* the text saith, when *Sodom* was to be destroyed, because *Lot* was a little wordly, and would not come off cleverly from his profits, *While he lingred,* saith the Text, *the men laid hold on him, the Lord being mercifull unto him, and brought him forth, and set him without the city, and it came to passe that when they had brought him forth, that they said, escape for thy life, looke not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountaine, lest thou bee consumed.* Marke how the holy man answereth; *Behold now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified the mercy which*



which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life, I cannot escape to the mountaine, lest I die, behold now this city, is it not a little one? let me escape thither and my soule shall live. Here lyes the point now, the Lord had told Lot, that he would destroy Sodom: why now he perswades him therefore to arise and away, lest hee perish, but the poore man he dreaming either of the profit that he might take, or else loath to part from his outward contentment, he lingred, at length (the Lord being mercifull unto him) he took him by the hand, and by maine force carried him, and by his almighty hand conveyed him and set him without the city, and bade him flie for his life; a great favour it was that the Lord revealed unto him the judgement that he would execute upon the city that he might escape it, but that the Lord should pluck him out of the fire by force, and carry him upon Eagles wings, what wonderfull goodnesse was this? and this Lot himselfe confesseth, saying, thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast shewed to thy servant in saving his life, not only to reveale favour and shew mercy, but to hale and carry one out of misery whether he will or no, what admirable mercy is this? It is my resolution saith the Lord, that whoremongers and adulterers, I will judge, those that live wickedly shall perish everlastingly; is it not a great mercy for God now to come to a drunkard, and say, I am resolved to overthrow all drunkards, and it is my purpose to destroy all adulterers, but if you will abstaine from these sinnes, I will shew mercy unto

to you, great goodnesse it is, that a man should have his heart forewarnd of misery, that he might prevent it; but that the Lord should by a strong hand pluck the drunkard from his cursed companions, and the adulterer from the company of his whore, and to pluck a covetous man from the bottome of the earth, not only to intreat him, and perswade him, but by his almighty hand to set him free from his corruptions, and say, escape for thy life, never be drunk more, never commit adultery more, never sweare more, lest thou perish, but go and save thy life, what a wonder is this! a poore soule should therefore go in secret, and say, Lord herein hast thou magnified mercy towards mee, for who was so nought, but I was as bad? who was so wicked, but I was worse? oh the mercies that thou hast shewed mee? oh the commands that have been suggested to mee, and yet I have stuck in the Alehouse, and continued in my sinnes: the flashe of hell fire have sparkled in my face; I have seene one drunkard going to hell, and the divell as it were dragging of him into everlasting destruction, and an other adulterer plunged into eternall damnation, and yet when I stuck fast in my sinnes all this while, that the Lord should not only perswade mee and intreat me to come out, but by maine force carry me out of these flames whether I would or no, oh what wonderfull goodnesse is this! that yet I live to praise and magnifie thy name, that yet I live to get assurance of thy love here, that I may reigne with thee for ever in glory hereafter



no mercy is like unto this, no mercy to be compared with this; this is not mercy, but the depth of mercy; this is not compassion only, but the bowells of compassion. Should a King come to a Peasant, and proclaime pardon unto him after he hath plotted treason against him, and if in the meane time the traytor rebells and flings away the pardon, were it fit that the King should yet pursue him with favour, or pursue him with judgement rather for neglecting this mercy? that hee should pursue him with favour this is more than nature can do, or will do in this kind: but here God doth not only proclaime pardon for our sinnes, and reveale mercy to us, but when wee contemne all, and slight all, and trample the pardon under our feet, yet the Lord will force his mercy upon us, and hee will save us whether we will or no; that the Lord should thus overcome us with compassion, let us walke worthy of all this riches of Gods favour, for the Lord Christ Iesus sake: and let no man presume because of this mercy and favour of the Lord, for hee that hath those cords and hooks cast upon him spoken of before, hee will bee wearied I warrant him before hee will bee made fit for mercy.

*Use 2.*

The next use is a word of terrour, it discovers the fearefull estate and wofull condition that those men are in, which purpose to set themselves against that work of preparation, which God meaneth for to work upon the soules of men. Is this the work of the Lord that hee doth by an holy kind of violence

lence draw a sinner from corruption to himselfe, out of the bowells of his compassion? what then shall we think and judge of those men, that use all meanes, and all flights; that employ their wits to draw sinners from God, to sinne? is it Gods great work, his Master-piece; the greatest good that hee intends for his people, to pluck them from their corruptions, and draw them to himselfe? what then wil become of those men that go professedly against God, and oppose the work of God in this kind: if there be any such persons here, as I doubt there are many such in the congregation; I tell you, if God be an holy God, then thou art an unholy man; if God bee mercifull to poore sinners to save them, then thou art cruell to damne them; if God bee a gracious God, and would draw poore sinners from sinne unto himselfe, then thou art a gracelesse man, and in a miserable condition, that wouldst draw poore soules from God to hell; and yet do now our townes swarme with such wretches? and are not our villages pestered with such ungracious miscreants? such as the wise man in the *Proverbs* speaketh of, *that eat the bread of wickednesse, and drink the blond of violence, and they cannot sleep unlesse they cause some to fall*; the God of heaven open these mens eyes, and awaken their consciences that they may see their wretched estate; such as eat the bread of wickednesse and drink the wine of violence, unlesse they can get such a man to bee drunk with them, and such a woman to play the whore with them, and such a fellow to couzen and chear, their



hearts cannot be at quiet, they are not at rest, in this case their sleep departeth from their eyes, unlesse they cause some to fall; if the Lord let in a light into the soule of a sinner, and discover unto him that he is in a wrong way, and that hee must take up a better course; if the Lord by the cords of mercy seeke to prevaile with a sinner; nay if he lay the hooks of conscience upon a sinner to pluck him from sinne to himselfe, there are a company that are made the contrary way, and they labour to cut the cords of mercy, and breaketh the hookes of conscience, and labour to hale a poore sinner downe to hell and destruction; nay wicked men have invented cord against cord, and hook against hook in this kind, the devill hath his factors and his brokers under him, which lay cords upon poore sinners, to withdraw them from the Lord to sinne: as God plucks heaven-ward, so they pluck to hell-ward; nay they have a cord for a cord, God hath not so many cords to pluck from sinne to himselfe, but they have as many to pluck men from God to sinne, and into the paths of ungodlinesse, that they may perish for ever; the Lord hath mercies to allure, and they have profits and pleasures to perswade and entice; the Lord hath the hooks of conscience to awaken, and they have base shifts this way also.

I will therefore discover these two things, first, the cunning of men in this course; secondly, the miserable condition that they are in, which continue in this course; I take it they are in the most

most wofull, and wretched estate of any men under heaven. First, to see the cunning of sinners in this kind, they will work upon the heart, and draw the soule, and cut Gods cords, and break Gods bonds, that God may not draw a poore sinner from sinne to himselfe, they have a cord for a cord, and a hook for a hook, in this kind: First, if God let in the light of knowledge into the understanding of a poore sinner, a young man perhaps receiveth direction by the word, that hee is not in the right way; the spirit that calls after him and tells him he is wrong, and saies, this is the good ancient way, walk in it: when the Lord lets in the light thus into the soule of a sinner, and reveales the good way to him; when the Lord thus turneth a man out of the mouth of the Lyon, and paw of the Beare, then happily he goes into a corner and mournes for his sinnes, and resolves to forsake them, hee will not keep company with his old companions, but seeks God alwayes, and prayes to God continually. Now mark what hooks they apply to pull him off from this good course, they use a company of carnall reasons to perswade him to the contrary; when the master, father, or husband, seeth that God is drawing his wife, or his servant, or his child unto himselfe, why then the towne is in an uproare, as if there were some fire in the towne: mark what the husband saies, my wife was wont to be carefull to go about her businesse, but now shee leaves all at six and seven, and is so precise, that she is alwayes praying or poring upon a booke. The child, hee



thinks his father distracted; his father perhaps gives him a strict charge not to prophane the Sabbath any more, no more gaming now sirra, no more sporting now, the child wonders at this, and stands amazed; he admires what is become of his father, hee was wont to suffer him to do these things without any controulment, and because now he commands him the contrary, he thinks his father is out of the right way. And as the child is to the father, so is the father to the child; if the understanding of the child be enlightened, and he be creeping to salvation; if hee will not do as he did in former times, if hee will not runne on in those wicked practises which hee did before, then the father thinks his sonne is undone, his sonne was wont to yeeld obedience to him, and hee was wont to have service from him, but now hee is growne so curious and exact, that he expects no goodnesse from him, hee can look for nothing to be done by him, I now give him over for lost: and as their hearts are thus troubled, so they pluck with a kind of violence from God, as God plucks to himselfe, so they labour to pluck a poore soule from God, and they begin to chide, & taunt, and chafe, and brawle: what say they, will you alwayes be reading, and will you alwayes be praying? I warrant, you think your mother and I are not in the right way, because we doe not as you doe, you thought heretofore such a man to be an honest man and your friend also, and yet hee doth not do thus as you do, nor you your selfe were not wont to do thus in former times neither. Thus  
mark

mark what cords they lay upon a man that hath  
 beene enlightned: the child happily replyeth, alas  
 father, when I knew no other, I must confesse, I  
 did no better; but when the Lord hath once given  
 us the truth, let us walke in it, I must follow the  
 example of no man in this kind; the Minister told  
 me that there was no expectation of mercy unlesse  
 I turned from my sinnes, the text was plaine, and  
 the Minister said, that we must walk in Gods Com-  
 mandements here, if ever we meane to reigne with  
 him in glory hereafter. Oh then saith the father,  
 I would the Minister had beene farre enough off,  
 when hee put this into your head: and if hee see  
 that this will not prevaile with the child, then hee  
 sets another upon him, hee sends his carnall friends  
 after him; he sets a carnall gospeller one that hath  
 beene *twice dead, and pluckt up by the roots*, as Saint  
*Iude* speakes upon him, and he bids him see what *Iude 12.*  
 he can do in this case, and then he comes and clo-  
 seth with him with all the carnall counsell and  
 wicked devices that can bee invented: and marke  
 how he sets upon him, Friend, saith he, I heare you  
 attend upon the Ministry of the Gospell, I am  
 very glad to heare it, but yet be wary and wise  
 though, too much, is too much in this case, your  
 head is not yet gray; if you had had the experi-  
 ence that I have, you would then perhaps know  
 as much as I know: be wise I say in this kind; but I  
 pray understand me aright, I do not speak against  
 holinesse all this while, I beseech you do not mi-  
 stake me so, for I am glad with all my heart that  
 there



there is such a change wrought in you, and that you take up such a good course, but this is that I say; Be religious and wise both together; blessed be God my friend; we have a glorious Church, many wise men, and yet they require not so much, and they performe not so much, they will drink and bee merry, and why should you exact more than these wise men? aye but, replyeth the child, I cannot tell what wise men say, and what they do, I must not do as they do, but as God commands; the Text saith, *Be yee holy, as I am holy; and bee yee pure, as Christ is pure*, 1. Ioh. 3. 3. can a man be more holy than Christ, can a man be more pure than Christ in this case? I know not what men do, but I am sure the word gives no such allowance: and now they think the matter is past hope, when carnall counsell cannot prevaile, nor cursed devices take place, then they think the matter is past cure, and therefore they pursue him with deadly indignation, they put such taunts upon him, and follow him with such scoffes, that the heart of the poore creature is even wearied and tyred, and so departs from his God and all good courses, and so hee falls into wicked courses againe, and runnes downe headlong into hell. And this is one cord which the wicked, the devills factors lay upon a poore sinner to pluck him from God; you that are guilty of this, you must see into these things, and be humbled for this, or else you must look to suffer that judgement which is due to the commission of this sinne; you must know you go professely against the Lord, and therefore you

you must needs bee in a miserable condition. Secondly, if this cord be broken, then the Lord hath another cord, the Lord makes a sinner apprehend the mercy of God, hee heares the Minister how he speaks of Gods wonderfull love and goodnesse, in that he will not only accept poore sinners and entertaine them when they come, but command them to come; and not only so, but intreates and beseeches them to come and receive mercy from him, nay hee waites for our amendment and cries out, oh when will it once bee, and when a poore sinner heares this, this even melts his heart, and he resolves never to follow his sinnes more, and then he comes home and tells his father or his master what wonderfull goodnesse God hath beene pleased to make knowne unto him. I, saith hee, could not have thought so much, I could not have conceived, so much: what, that God should stoope to man, and majesty to misery? that God should not only offer grace, and give a sinner leave to take grace, but that God should follow such a wretch as I am with mercy, and intreat mee to bee saved? what admirable and wonderfull goodnesse is this! Father, or master, shall I be so unnaturall as to neglect this mercy and kindnesse? oh let it never bee for the Lord Iesus sake. Thus the father or the master seeth his child or his servant going away from his evill courses which he had formerly taken up, the father fees which way the child is going, and he followes after him amaine, and labours to pluck away this cord with another, and therefore thus



he answereth; It is true indeed, there is a great deale of mercy, endlesse, boundlesse mercy with the Lord, therefore let us make use of this mercy, sonne; and let us take this goodnesse, servant: in this case, the Lord will not onely provide for the good of our soules, but for the good of our bodies also: as the Lord requireth that wee should performe service to him, so hee requireth also that we should have a care of our owne estates, and therefore take heed of growing into too nice a course; bee not too extreame this way, for the Lord doth not require such exactnesse of you, that thereby you should impoverish your estate: beware therefore of too much precisenesse I say, lest you bring thereby disgrace to your selfe, and damage to your estate, and hazzard to your life: the Lord promiseth to prosper whatsoever wee take in hand, and therefore this nice course is not that which God requireth, and by this means the poore child or servant is daunted and deluded, and so falls off from his good purposes and resolutions. Thus those two cords are broken: the Lord hath yet a third cord, and that is the cord of conscience, which hee layes upon a man, and that commands him to take heed of his corruptions, and tells him, he was wont to be gibing at Gods servants, but take heed of these things, all at the last day must bee brought to light; now this makes the soule at a stand: and then the man saith, the word of God came home to my conscience, for I have beene a drunkard, and an adulterer, and a swearer; oh I saw the

the fearefull estate of those men; the Minister came effectually home to my conscience, and told mee what a miserable wretched condition I should be in, if I continued in my former wicked courses. Now marke the cord that they lay to draw this away, they lay a disgrace and contempt upon conscience; when (say they) did you take notice of your conscience? will you be one of our tender conscienced people? what your conscience troubled you, did it? what will you be so simple? will you be such a foole to shake at the word of a teacher? alas, alas, it is not conscience, it is but conceit in this case: and so at last the poore sinner falls off againe by the inticements of Satan, and carnall counsells of wicked men, and at last the Lord lets in horror, and anguish, and vexation into the conscience, and sets the very flashes of hell fire upon his face, and now scoffes and scornes will not serve the turne, for the poore soule saith, Now I find that it was not conceit that troubled mee, for the flashes of hell have beene in my face; and all the opposition against God and his truth, all the taunts and scoffes against God and his servants, and all my abominations that ever I committed, I tell you, I saw them all set before me, and I saw hell open in conclusion, and God executing judgement upon me for my finnes. Now when his companions see him in this humour, they think a scoffe will not chase away this horror, for he tells them, it is not your scoffes that will do it now; no, no, I am going to hell, and you will follow after me as fast as may



be, you haled me to drunkenesse, and adultery, and other base confes; you drew me to ungodly practises, and therefore you shall to hell as well as I, do you think that I shall goe to hell, and you not make haste after me? do you think that I shall bee damned, and you not be plagued? when his companions see this, then they leave scoffing and gibing of him, and dare not appeare themselves, but the devill hee transformes himselfe into an angell of light; a drunkard will not now come unto him in the coate of a drunkard, but he takes the coate of some seeming grave man upon him, and hee must set upon him, and tell him how the case stands: and this carnall man doth three things to draw away the heart from God, in this kind first he deludes conscience, and tels him there is such a thing in feare, but nothing in deed, thou, saith he, art sinfull, and God is mercifull, thou hast beene an adulterer, so was *David*, and hee did nothing, but say, I have sinned, and he was forgiven: oh but saith the poore soule, *David* was a broken hearted man, and this broke his very bones. Well, when he seeth this will not do, then secondly, he must get him to cards, and to dice, to sports and to playes, untill his conscience be benumbed and seared, and then thirdly all goodnesse must be kept from him in these cases; especially they will be sure that he doth not look upon a Bible, lest by that meanes hee might bee drawne away againe. Now the Lord be mercifull unto us; the poore man by counsell on one side, and allurements on the other; whereas before his soule was a  
little

little inlightned and his conscience awakened, now he begins to turne a devill, he flies about as though hell were broken loose, he cares not what he doth for the dishonouring of God, and damning of his owne soule, so that by this time you see the subtilty of men in this kind: Will you now know the condition of these men, I tell you, if there bee any wretched, miserable, wofull, accursed, damned people in the world, I cannot tell who they be, unless these be they, and therefore observe the wofulnesse of their condition in three respects; first, they are most like the devill; secondly, they are most opposite to God; thirdly, they are the greatest enemies to mens salvation: first, they that oppose this worke of conversion and salvation, are as like the divell as can be, *Acts 13. 8.* the Text saith, when *Paul* was to deale with *Sergius Paulus* the Deputy Lievetenant of the countrey, the Deputy called for *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and desired to heare the word of God, now *Elymas* the sorcerer, who was with the Deputy, seeing the wind in that doore; *Paul* hee would have drawne the Deputy to the faith, but *Elymas* he withstood him, seeking to turne him away from the faith; now marke what *Paul* saies unto him, I would not say so, nay I durst not speak it, but that the Scripture is plaine; then, saith the Text, *Paul being full of the holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, oh full of all subtilty and mischiese, thou child of the divell, thou enemy to all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the way of God?* as if he had said, here is the very claw and paw of the



devill, he is not only naught himselfe, but hianders others from doing good. *Gen. 3. 17.* when the Lord had committed that threatning unto *Adam* and *Eve*; *that in that day that they eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they should surely perish*; so long as the woman could beleeeve that threatning, she was well enough; now Satan perceiving this, comes and takes away the life of the threatning, and the power of the command, and gainsayd the word of God; what saith hee, hath God said that yee shall not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evill, and in that day yee eat thereof yee shall die? no, no, saith he, you shall not surely die at all, for God doth know, that in that day yee eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and yee shall be as Gods, knowing good and evill; first he takes away the edge of the command, and causes the woman to slight the threatning; what did God say, you should die? you shall not die at all, but be as Gods, knowing good and evill; as who should say, God doth this for his own ends, for he knowes when you do this, you shall be like unto Gods; thus the devill did in the beginning, and looke what hee did, that his children do now: They that oppose this worke of God, they have the tricks of their father up and downe; they are as like the devill, as if he had spued them out of his mouth; the Lord saith, he that killeth, shall surely die the death; this the truth saith, and Ministers say, but they say, there is no such matter; God is gracions and mercifull, God did this to feare men,  
and

not to vex men ; and they slight that commandement of God also, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy selfe, as thy life, and as thy soule, but they say, though the word say so, yet it is no matter whether men obey that commandement or no ; the divell did so from the beginning, and they doe so now ; what saith the divell, did God say that you should not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evill, and in the day yee eat thereof yee should die ; why you shall not die at all ; what say they, did the Minister say, that your consciences must bee awakened, and your hearts must be humbled, or else you should perish ; you shall not die, your conversation is holy enough, and you need not take so strict a course in this kind ; thus the divell did in the beginning, and thus his children, his brokers and factors do in the end of the world, these are the two sonnes of Satan, the chiefest schollers in his schoole, they are able to bring many to destruction and confusion, *Rev. 12.4.* There the Text saith, *that the Dragon stood before the woman that was to bee delivered, for to devoure her child as soone as it should bee borne* ; the woman is the Church, the Dragon is the divell, the child to be borne is the soule that is to be converted : when the Church doth bring a soule to life, why then the Dragon watcheth when the child is borne that he may devoure it : if there be any that looke to heaven, if there be any whose hearts are humbled, whose minds are inlightned, and consciences awakened, the divell watcheth when this soule is borne, vno that



that hee may devoure it; so it is with wicked persons that beare the image and exercise the practise of the divell, if there be any that God is pleased to work upon, why wicked men they court them at all times and occasions that can be, all is too good for them in this kind; nicenesse, and exactnesse, and precisenesse, and madnesse, and all is cast upon them to devoure poore sinners, and hinder poore Saints, to hinder the birth of the child, that the Church travellet withall; why wouldst thou devoure a poore creature that God in mercy would deliver from sinne here, and bring to salvation hereafter? Dost thou envy him, dost thou by cursed perswasions and wicked devices endeavour to pluck from God to sinne; I tell thee, if there were ever a divell in a man, there is one in thee; if there were ever a child of the divell, that was wicked here, and shall be damned hereafter, thou art surely one: and this is the first thing wherein the miserable condition of these men is discovered; they are the children of the divell, the Lord of heaven open your eyes, and awaken your consciences, and reveale these things to your soules, that you may forsake these base courses; secondly, as they are most like to the divell, so also their wretched estate appears in this, that they are the greatest and deadliest enemies to God, that place formerly named will serve for the opening of this, *Act 13. 10.* there saith the Text, *thou child of the divell, and enemy to all righteousness*, Paul calls *Elymas* the sorcerer, because hee withstood him, and resisted the work of God, not only

only the child of the divell, but an enemy to all righteousness; mark that, as who should say, he that withholdeth a Saint of God, hee that would pluck a soule from walking uprightly before God, he is an enemy to all righteousness, and this is a most fearful thing; for other kind of sinnes are of a lesse nature, for a drunkard is an enemy to sobriety, an unjust person is an enemy to justice, a lyer is an enemy to truth, an adulterer is an enemy to chastity, and a malicious man is an enemy to charity; but he that is an enemy to the saving work of Gods grace in the soule of a man, he that withstands and resists the worke of conversion, hee is an enemy to all righteousness; for how shall a man walk holily before God, or righteously before his brethren, how shall he love God above all things, and his neighbour as himselfe, unlesse grace be wrought in the soule of a man, and unlesse the word of God bee placed in the heart of a man: men ought to keep Gods Comandements that they may receive comfort from God; now unlesse God bestow faith, and grace, and his spirit upon a man, how shall hee do this; but when thou sayest, I would not have such a man converted, I would not have the spirit work effectually in his heart; when thou hinderest the work of God in this kind, then thou hinderest a man from performing obedience to Gods Comandements, and therefore thou art an enemy to God; Gods Sabbaths can never be sanctified, the life of thy neighbour can never be tendered, the chastity of thy neighbour can never be preserved;

M m m

thou



thou art a drunkard, thou art an adulterer, thou art  
 a murdurer, he that murdereth a man, is an enemy  
 to the life of a man, but he that will not suffer the  
 word of God to take place in the soule of a sinner,  
 he is the murdurer of the soule of a man, he is an  
 enemy to all righteousness, he cannot performe  
 any service unto God; there is no duty to be per-  
 formed, no sinne to bee omitted, but thou art an  
 enemy to all, for when thou dost hinder a sinner  
 from receiving of grace, and from being made par-  
 taker thereof, thou dost hinder a sinner from ho-  
 nouring of God here, and receiving of comfort  
 hereafter, and what a wofull wretched condition is  
 this to be an enemy to all righteousness, and not  
 only so, but full of all mischief, for so saith the  
 Text aforenamed; thou enemy of all righteous-  
 nesse, and full of all mischief, marke the opening  
 of the words; full, that is, brim full, top full, rea-  
 dy to runne over with wickednesse, and the cause is  
 this; its naught for a man to be wicked, and to re-  
 solve to be no better, is worse; but for a man not on-  
 ly to be wicked, and resolve to be no better, but to  
 hinder others also from being good, this is the very  
 height of all impiety, this is to be an enemy to all  
 righteousness, and to be full of mischief. Third-  
 ly, as they are the children of the devell, and ene-  
 mies to all righteousness, so also they are the  
 greatest enemies to the salvation of mens soules,  
 they compasse sea and land to make a Profelyte: I  
 beseech you take notice of it, thou art a drunkard  
 and a blasphemour, and a wretched lewd person, thou  
 art

art not only bad thy selfe, but such a man hath had his mind inlightened and his conscience awakened, but thou by thy wicked counsells and carnall reasons, and sinfull arguments catchest him, and withdrawest him againe into his former wicked courses and base practises, and then the end of that man is worse than the beginning, and hee becometh twice a child of the divell; well, he shall perish, and so shalt thou, he shall be damned, but the Lord shall require his blood at thy hands; and this is the maine cause why men perish and go downe to hell: namely, the wicked counsells and cursed perswasions which sinfull damned persons use to hurrie poore soules downe into destruction, as though they could not go fast enough of themselves to hell, but they must lay these base sinfull cords upon them, to draw them headlong into the bottomlesse pit of confusion. Well, the time will come, when these poore creatures shall call for vengeance at the hand of God to bee executed against you; they will accuse you at the last day, and curse you, and call for vengeance to be poured downe upon your heads; you that are guilty of this, whensoever you meet with the day of death here, or with the day of judgement hereafter, then it will go marvellous heavily with you; you have hindred the worke of conversion for being wrought in them, and you have drawne them into wicked courses; they shall go to hell, they shall perish poore soules, but I tell you, their blood will God require at your hands, at that day they will appeare before the Lord of  
M m m 2 glory,



glory, and call for vengeance against you; when the heavens shall melt with fire, and when the Lord shall have tenne thousand thousand of Angels ministering unto him; when all flesh at the dreadfull day of judgement shall appeare before the judgement seat of God, and render an account of that they have done here upon earth, then here you shall see a cursed drunkard, there a wretched adulterer, and there a prophane swearer; and they shall come and accuse those that have drawne them into the commission of these sinnes, and they shall say, I confesse Lord I was inlightned, my eyes were opened, and my heart was touched, and my conscience was awakened, and I was resolved to walke in a good course; but Lord here is the man, behold here is the woman, that by wicked devises and cursed perswasions never left untill I fell off from this good resolution, and turned to my former wicked wayes; this is the man Lord that did this, and therefore I beseech thee though I perish, yet let not my bloud go unrevenge at this mans hands that hath beene the cause of my destruction; and then this will lie heavy upon your score, at the day of death, or the day of judgement; when these poore foules shall appeare before God; I will tell you what complaints they will make to his Majesty, they will say, Lord I was in a good way, my eyes were opened, and my heart was humbled, my heart did earne towards Gods truth and holy men, I would have turned over a new leafe, and led a new life, but it was this Land-lord of mine that feared

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and terrified mee, and pluckt mee aside from this good course; good Lord revenge my bloud at my Land-lords hand, the servant he will say; Lord, there was a gracious fellow servant lived in the house with me, and did me much good, I loved to heare thy word, and pray, and read, and performe good duties, but good Lord, it was the sharp reproofes and bitter taunts of my master that discouraged me, and made me forsake my former course; and therefore now I must go to hell, but Lord though I perish, yet I beseech thee revenge my bloud at my masters hands. Many of you have wives that lie in your bosomes, in whose hearts the word of God hath begun to take place, and they have resolved to walk uprightly before God; they have gone and mourned in secret, and sighd to heaven, but it is you that are their husbands which have hindered this gracious disposition, and you thought your selves undone because your wives took this course, and therefore you never left brawling, and bayting, and rayling, untill your poore wives left all, left praying, and left reading, and left all goodnesse; I tell you, those wives that now lie in your bosomes, though they love you now, the time will come when they will curse the day that ever they saw or knew you; what a wofull case will it be at the day of judgement, when the wife shall come before the Lord and say, I confesse Lord, I enjoyed thy word, and it was brought home to my soule, and it wrought upon my conscience, and I had a full purpose to become a new creature, and take a new course; I



was comming Lord, I was comming, but it was this husband of mine that drew mee from my felle and thy service, from a good course, and from a good way, and therefore require my bloud at his hands; though I perish, yet good Lord, let not my damnation be unrevengeed at my husbands hands; and many of you wives if your husbands have beene inlightned and wrought upon by the word, inso-much that they come home and say, wife, wee must reforme our families, and we must pray with them, and wee must bee carefull that both wee and they keep Gods Commandements; then you wives are untoward, and unreasonable, and the house is not able to hold you, and your husbands live in a miserable condition, untill they have altered their former purpose: why these husbands of yours will go downe to hell, but their bloud will lie heaue upon your heads, and will bee required at your hands; they will say, Lord I was once in the right way, I was comming, I was almost perswaded to bee Christian; I do think verily if I had had another wife, I should have led a good life upon the earth, and have beene saved hereafter, but this wife of mine, Lord, never left bayting and hayning at me, untill I turned out of the right way; they will curse the day that ever they saw you, or that ever you met together, and they will entreat God not to suffer them to goe to hell without revenging of their bloud upon your heads: you that are such, I beseech you think of these things, you that have heard these things, the Lord of heaven perswade your hearts

hearts to take heed of drawing away poore sinners from God; if it were in my power, I would not only perswade you, but overcome you in this kind; if it were in my power to save you, I would give salvation unto you; but alas, it is not in my power, and indeed it is pitty it should; it is the Lord that must do it; you that have heard this word, I beseech you let it not fall to the ground; but all you scornors and mockers at Gods Saints, you that have drawne men out of the right way, and out of a good course, for the Lords sake, and for mercies sake, and for your owne poore soules sake, be resolved never againe to draw away poore sinners from that course wherein they walke; but when you see them going on well, why then goe you along with them, and if you see any lay cords upon them to draw them away, helpe them, you in this kind, and labour to draw them backe againe.

The fourth use, is an use of comfort and consolation to all poore soules, marke it for the Lord Iesus sake, it is a ground of unspeakable comfort, to all poore creatures, partly unconverted, and partly converted all from the former truth; they may observe marvellous refreshment of heart, if they will but attend thereunto, and be ruled thereby; you that are in the gall of bitternesse, and in a carnall condition; you that live in base grosse courses, you who are knowne to all the world that you live in common ordinarie finnes; you that are locked up under infidelity, under a proud stubborne heart; here is a ground of admirable joy and consolation  
to.



to sustaine the hearts of all such poore creatures, in the expectation of mercy and comfort, when the floods of iniquity beset a man on every side, when the weight of his sinnes lies heavie upon his heart, and the soule complains as *David* did, my sinnes are gone over my head, they are to heavie for me, I am not able to beare them, these mightie corruptions I shall never bee able to master them, these sinnes that hang upon me, and these distempers that cleave unto me, oh I cannot bee rid of them, I see my sinnes more than ever I did, and yet they follow me, and still they pursue after me, I shall never be freed from them, I shall never get dominion over them; why there is admirable comfort from the former point, for such a poore soule that is thus oppressed by, and overwhelmed with corruptions; the doctrine is this, God by a holy kind of violence doth pluck men from sinne and draw them to himselfe; though thy sinnes will not part from thee, yet the Lord will pluck those corruptions from thy soule, hee will awaken thy conscience, and humble thy heart, he will bring downe thy sturdie heart; be thy sinnes therefore never so great, and thy corruptions never so mightie, yet take consolation hereby: the maine trouble of a poore soule lieth in three respects; partly in regard of the temptations of Satan, partly in regard of corruptions, partly in regard of the opposition a man finds in a good course; these are marvellous hinderances to a Christian, and here is marvellous comfort from the former truth against all those;  
first,

first, for temptations, when the Lord letteth Satan loose upon a poore sinner, and the divell begins to domineere over a sinner, and trample upon a sinner, and tells a sinner that to hell he must go, and away hee must with him; it is in vaine to strive, for his finnes are so strong that they shall never bee removed, his corruptions will never part from him, and therefore he wissheth a sinner to put an end to his daies, and so to his sinning, for he shall never be recovered, he shall never be freed from the guilt of his finnes, and the dominion of them: this is Satans power, and this is like the wind that blew downe *Iobs* house, that great and mightie tempest which came from the wildernesse, and smote the foure corners of his house, and made it fall upon his sonnes; so I conceive the violent whurries of temptation, and the fierce assaults of Satan, come East and West, North and South, upon the heart of a sinner; insomuch that the heart beginnes to sinke, and conceives it selfe almost in hell, it thinks it shall never overcome those assaults, it thinks it shall never get out of these temptations; you that finde these now, or may find these hereafter, let it please God to speake peace unto you; you may observe marvellous comfort from the former doctrine, the Text saith, if Satan will not come out, the Lord Iesus will bind the strong man, and overcome him, and take his weapons away from him, and free the house of him, and then he himselfe will go in and rake possession: *Rom. 16. 20.* there saith the Text, *The Lord of hea-*



*ven shall shortly beate downe Satan and treade him  
under feet: howeuer haply Satan will not downe,  
but be proud and malicious towards you, though  
you cannot conquer him, and quiet him, though  
you cannot command the churlish curley, yet the  
master can; if there bee a bandogge or a mastiffe  
in the way, the passenger must seeke by all faire  
meanes to appease him, and yet haply hee will not  
be quiet, but if the master comes he can command  
him, and still him presently; so it is with this curle  
diuill, he is nothing else but Gods bandogge, Gods  
mastiffe, whereby hee whurrieth poore sinners to  
make them runne to heauen for comfort; though  
you cannot quiet him, yet God can command  
him and make him fall under your feet, and though  
he will not go out yet, God will by strong hand  
cast him out whether hee will or no, nay though  
there were a legion of diuills in thee, yet the Lord  
will force them out, *Luke 8. 30.* Christ met with a  
man which had diuills a long time; *and when hee  
saw Iesus hee fell downe before him, and cryed with a  
lowd voyce, what haue wee to do with thee Iesus the  
sonne of the liuing God; and Iesus asked him what is  
thy name, and they said, legion, because many diuills  
were entred into him; I command thee thou un-  
cleane spirit to come out of him, saith Christ, and  
so Satan was forced out whether hee would or no,  
and therefore cheare thou thy soule, and comfort  
thou thy heart, which findest troubles in this kind,  
and the temptations of Satan, if hee be violent in  
tempting, God will be as strong in conquering and  
binding**

binding of him, and hee will cast him out; and this is the first thing which hinders a man in a christian course, namely, the temptations of Satan; and if thy heart bee still manuring and perplexed, and faith, the temptations of Satan are fierce. But secondly, these corruptions of mine; oh they are extreme; so that my sinnes are like a mayne flood which passeth over my head, one wave cometh after another, wickednesse after wickednesse, and iniquity after iniquity, now proud, now studdy, now covetous, now loose, now prophane, now unfaithfull: oh these secret sinnes of mine, and these bo- some abominations of mine, by which my heart hath so long beene swayed, in which my soule hath so long continued: I shall never bee freed from these, I shall never get the mastery over these, espe- cially these beloved darlings lusts of mine; God must breake my bones before they will out, for my soule is still pursuing these distempers, so that the poore sinner concludes as he did, 2 King. 7. 2. when there was a great famine in *Samaria* the Prophet *Elisha* came and prophesied saying, *to morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flower be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gates of Samaria*, then a ruler or a noble man upon whom the King leaned, sayth the text, answered the man of God and sayd, behold, if the Lord would make windowes in heaven might this thing be? as who should say, is it possible there should be such plenty on the suddaine? no, though God make windowes in heaven it cannot be. So the soule sayth, is it possible

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these sweet lusts, these darling abominations, so long committed, so long continued, so long practised, can they ever bee pardoned; if the Lord should make windowes of comfort and consolation, is it possible that my soule should ever be refreshed? why yet for all this, behold a great deale of comfort from the former point, though thy sinnes bee never so violent to pursue thee, though thy corruptions bee never so strong to set upon thee, yet God is more strong to conquer those sinnes, and more strong to subdue those corruptions, bee the union between sinne and thy soule never so neere, God will breake that bond, and snap those cords in sunder; bee the dominion that sinne hath over thy soule never so great, yet the power which Christ hath over those sins is much more forcible, though thy sturdy heart will not come off, though thou hast no desire to leave thy corruptions, though thou hast not put off the will of sinning, yet God can take it away, and make way for the power of his spirit to take place in thy heart, *Acts 16.24.* we shall observe this in the Iaylor, he was a proud, sturdy dogged, cruell hearted man, when the Magistrates commanded him to put *Paul and Silas* into prison, hee went further than his commission, and put *them into the inner Prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks*: oh thought hee, now I have gotten these nice factious fellowes into my hands, I will punish them soundly: Now at midnight *Paul and Silas* sang praises unto God, and then suddenly there was an exceeding great earthquake, so that the foundation

dations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doores were opened, and every ones bands were loosed; the doores flew open, the prison shooke, and the earth shooke, God exercised his power upon the creatures and made them shake, and yet the Iaylor stood still all this while and stirred not; though he were a Iaylor now to the Apostles, yet the Devill was a Iaylor to him also, he was under the jayle of his sinnes, his sturdy heart would not awaken all this while, but at last the Iaylor hee shooke also, and seeing the prison doores open, pulled out his sword and would have killed himselfe, supposing that the prisoners had fled; but Paul cryed with a loud voyce saying, doe thy selfe no harme, for wee are all here; and then hee called for a light and sprang in, sayth the text, and came trembling and fell downe before Paul and Silas: he now saw all that pride and stubbornesse of his, whereby he handled the Apostles so basely, and now he brought them out and sayd, Sirs, what must I doe to bee saved? hee now bathed their wounds, and set bread before them, and dealt kindly with them; and thus we see when the Lord commeth for a sinner, he maketh the prison shake, and the earth shake, & the doores shake, & the yron bolts shake, and at last he makes the heart shake also; it is not the doore that I care for, nor the prison that I care for, nor the earth only that I will make to shake, but it is the jaylor that I will shake also, it is the Iaylor that I come for, & the Iaylor I will have, and so hee had indeed in conclusion, thy corruptions are not so powerfull, but the Lord will bee



more powerfull to pluck thy heart from them unto himselfe. The third thing that hinders a poore sinner in this case is in respect of disgrace & other opposition that hee shall meet withall in a Christian course; I could be content, saith he, to take a better course and leade a new life, and become a Christian, but I see how disgrace will be cast upon me and opposition be made against me, and this knocks me off, I am not able to suffer it, and to beare it; are you not so? the Lord will make you able to beare it before he hath done with you; you feare wild-fire do you? God will make you feelee hell fire before he hath done; you will goe against conscience, & you will displease God, before you will displease man, wil you? wel, you feare man now, & the face of man, this is but wild fire, but God will send hell fire into your hearts one day, he will send the horrour of conscience into your soules, & then you will say, rather disgrace here, than damnation for ever hereafter, I will rather goe to hell than to sinne, I will rather offend all the world then God; gather up your selves therefore, if God at any time hath opened your eyes; though Satan pursue you, and though corruptions presse upon you, yet cheere your selves, God in mercy will looke upon you. *Esa. 43. 6.* there when the Lord commeth to gather his people together, hee saith, *that hee will bring them from the East, and gather them from the West, he will call to the North, give up, and to the South, keepe not back, bring my sonnes from farre, and my daughters from the end of the earth;* hee sayth, the earth shall

shall give account, and yeeld up her dead, the sea, that also shall yeeld up her dead; why God can make the diuell yeeld up a wretched man, as well as the earth give up a dead man; God will say, I must have a sinner diuell, and therefore deliver up thy prisoner; God will draw thy heart out of the power of sinne and dominion of Satan, though thou canst not tell how, yet God is able to give thee a will of yeelding unto him, and so much for the comfort of those that are unconverted, there is hope that God will do you good, bee your sinnes what they will bee: now those that are converted, and those that are in the state of grace, this is a ground of strong comfort unto them, that they shall prevaile against all sinnes for after times; by the power of that God that hath given them victory over their sinnes in former times; they may say, did the Lord give me power over my sinnes when I loved them, and will hee not give me power to resist them now when I have desire to forsake them? it cannot bee, hee that offered favour to thee when thou didst refuse it, hee cannot but give favour to thee when thou beggest it at his hands, and this shall suffice for that matter.

The fifth use is an use of exhortation to all Gods people: is this the cord that God taketh to pluck a soule from corruption to himselfe, namely, by a holy kind of violence? why, what will you do then you that professe your selves to feare God, and that say you are the children of God, must not children imitate their father? doth God deale thus with poore



poore sinners? then do you so likewise, this is the course that God takes, and this ought to be a copy and pattern to you in the meane time, as you are the Elect people of God to put on the bowels of mercy and compassion towards your brethren, if ever mercy, here it ought to be expressed and discovered, if ever God shewed mercy to thy soule, shew thou the like mercy to thy brethren, did the Lord ever shew compassion unto thee, shew thou the like compassion unto them, did the Lord ever awaken thy eyes or humble thy heart, did the Lord offer his favours to thee, still calling, still exhorting and perswading of you? you that are the Elect people of God, if ever God shewed any goodnesse unto you, shew the same goodnesse, mercy, and compassion to your fellow brethren, and therefore as God hath dealt with you, and as hee doth deale with sinners, let it bee your honour and your resolutions to deale answerably to God, so saith the Prophet *David*, *I will reveale thy way to the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee*; oh blessed spirit, when the Lord had shewed mercy to him, then saith he, *I will teach thy way to the wicked, and sinners shall be converted*, as if he should say, *I will have no nay at the hands of sinners in this kind, the proud heart shall bee humbled, and the sturdy heart shall be softened*; I will exhort all sinners to come unto thee, that art a God hearing sinners, and shewing mercy unto sinners; if God bee urgent, so be you, also labour you with a holy kind of violence to draw sinners unto heaven, and to help  
on

on this exhortation, for your help herein, labour to draw them these two wayes; labour your selves to do whatsoever in your power lyeth; secondly, labour to help them by the supply of others that may doe that which you cannot; first in regard of your selves, foure things are remarkable; first, set upon the sinner with a holy kind of heavenly resolution of soule, and labour every way to expresse your love towards him, for the good and benefit of him, by sweet counsell, loving exhortations, gentle admonitions, and sharp reproofes; do to your utmost power worke upon poore sinners, *Heb. 3. 13. Exhort one another, saith the Text, daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne*; but above all, that place is remarkable for this purpose, that we should advise, and comfort, and quicken, and every way do that which may be most advantagious for our brethren, *1. Thess. 5. 14. Wee exhort you brethren, saith the Apostle, warne them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men, see that none render evill for evill unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among your selves and to all men*; the Apostle doth not say, that it is in one mans power to do this, but all ought to do it; men, brethren, and fathers, ought to do it; every sonne and daughter of *Adam*: if there bee any weak, strengthen them; if there bee any down, raise them; deale patiently and lovingly with all, deale answerably to the necessities of all sinners, whom you have to do withall; but you will say, am

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I my brothers keeper? aye that you are your brethrens keepers, or else you are their murtherers; wouldst thou not defend thy brother from murdering, if thou shouldst see a cōpany of theeves set upon him & go about to slay him, wouldst thou not labour by all meanes possibly to succour him? and hath God care of Oxen and Asses; wilt thou preserve thy brother from a bodily death, and wilt thou not doe much more for the soule of thy brother, for the saving of him from eternall death and damnation? dost thou see a sinner whurried and teared by Satan, dost thou see the divell robbing him of all his graces, and hearest him crying murther, murther, and wilt thou not help him and relieve him? if you should lie in your beds and heare one cry murther, murther, would you not rise & rescue him? why every sinner, every proud man, every covetous man, every malicious man, every drunkard, adulterer, blasphemers, the divell and those sins do prey upon them, and worry their soules; oh help them mercifully, and perswade them lovingly, rescue your child or your husband, or your friend out of the jawes of Satan, and work every way for their good; in the 17. of *Iude* remember that, *build up one another, saith the Text, on your most holy faith, labour to save some, and pluck them out of the fire,* and though they doe not call to thee for help, yet offer thy helping hand unto them; if thy neighbours house be on a fire, thou wilt not stay till thou beest called, but if they that be within be dead in sleep, then thou wilt break open the doore up-

on them, and awake them and rouse them up; so deale with the soules of poore sinners, there is one man, his soule is set on fire with hell, it is all on a flame with devilish lust; dost thou see the soule of thy neighbour all on a flame in this kind, why then breake in upon him, haply hee will not intreat thy help, but that's no matter, stand not upon complements, but with a holy kind of violence pluck him out of the fire; you that are wise, pluck the drunkard off the Ale-bench, hale poore creatures out of hell and corruption; did the Lord deale so with you, why then deale you so with your fellow brethren; and if you be not able to prevaile your selves, if your owne counsell bee too weak, then take two or three with thee; it is Christs counsell, *Mat. 18. 16. If thy brother shall trespass against thee, goe and tell him his fault betweene thee and him alone, if hee shall heare thee, thou hast gained thy brother: but if hee will not heare thee, then secondly, take to thee two or three more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established;* that is, take severall neighbours wise and holy, and so double reproofes & admonitions; doe not onely perswade him, but overpower him; not only repoove him, but convince him; let thy neighbour exhort, and thou also; let thy neighbour admonish and thou too; let thy neighbour reprove, and thou too; double your exhortations, and admonitions, and reproofes, that at last you may prevaile with him. But you will say, if the soule still staieth in his distempers, what must wee then do? why if



he returne to sinne againe, then thirdly, returne you to reproofes and exhortations againe, and never leave him; when thou goest to his house, and meetest him in the way, and seeest him in the fields, then still in all places, upon all occasions, reprove and exhort him, and hale him from his ungodly courses, and if the sinner yet will not hearken to thy exhortations, but scorneth thee, then the Lord doth free thee from thy counselling of him; doe not cast pearles before swines, but yet though thou needst not counsell him publickly, yet go into thy chamber and mourne for him secretly, as *Jeremy* did for the people of *Ierusalem*, *Lam. 1. 17.* *for these things, saith he, I weepe, mine eye, mine eye runneth downe with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soule, is farre from me; and my children are desolate:* doe thou so for the soule of a poore sinner, and pluck hard to get help from heaven for him, and intreat God never to give quiet to his soule, untill his eyes be opened, and his heart humbled; lastly, when your selves have done what you can, and when you have used the help of others, if after this he returnes to his former course, and then when thou fallest to reprove him and exhort him againe, he then becomes a scorner, then labour to bring him to receive what succour hee may from others, and that two wayes; first, by what meanes you may bring him to the publick meanes, it was so with *Cornelius*, after that by Gods Commandement he had sent for *Peter*, and *Peter* was to come, he drew all his friends and acquaintance together, saith

saith the Text, and then he saith to Peter, *we are all here present before thee, to heare all things that are commanded thee of God*; and it was that passage, *Ezech. 33. 3.* there the people speake one to another, saying, *Come let us goe up to the house of the Lord, and heare what is the word that commeth from the Lord*; mark how they call one another together, and rap at one anothers doore; thus do you counsell men to come unto the Lord and heare his word, they will never come under the power of the hammer else, that they may bee stricken, hale them, and draw them to the ministry of the word, that so what you cannot do privately, that the word may do in publick, *Ioh. 5. 4.* there was an Angell went downe at a certaine time into the pool of Bethesda, and troubled the waters, then whosoever first stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had; now there lay a poore lame man at the brinke of the waters, and because he was not able to step in, every one stepped in before him, and no man would help him; mark how hee complaineth in the seventh verse, *I have no man*, saith he, *when the water is troubled to put me into the poole, but while I am comming, another steppeth downe before me*; he would faine have got in but could not: the word of God is like this poole of Bethesda, when the word of God is opened, and plainly and familiarly discovered, when the spirit moveth upon the waters; why put a poore soule into the water, fling the soule of your child, or your servant, or your friend into the poole; perswade what you may, and compell those that are



under you to come unto the word of God, whē the word of God is soundly revealed & delivered; why, put a poore soule into the waters, such a man hath a lame heart, hee is lame in his practise, and lame in his praying, and lame in the performance of holy duties, he is a cripple from his cradle; why bring such of your neighbours and put them into the water, and intreat the Lord to work upon them, that the Angell may move from heaven and work conversion and salvation to the soules of them: secondly, as you must labour to bring them under the power of the word, so secondly, when God hath made knowne his word to the hearts of them, follow you the blow as much as in you lyeth; if there bee any exhortation, settle it; if there be any admonition, presse it; if there be any reproofe, apply it home unto their soules; strike thou while the iron is hot; if thy child were touched and inlightned by the word, when the Lord hath stricken his heart, follow thou the blow, when the Lord is pleased to smite his soule, bring thou the blow home unto the heart of him; remember that, *Deut. 6. 7.* there saith the Text, *these words which I command thee shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children*; the word in the originall is, thou shalt sharpen them, thou shalt teach them, that is, thou shalt sharpen them upon the soules of thy children, and upon the soules of thy servants; the Ministers do what they can, and you heare reproofes and exhortations, and when you go out of the Church, leave them in your stooles behind you; but

but you should sharpen them and bring them home to the hearts of your wives, and your children, and servants, and they that belong unto you; you should follow the blow home; when the Lord is pleased to exhort, exhort you; when the Lord is pleased to reprove, reprove you; it is no great matter haply, to bring your children or servants under the word, but when they are here, they play and sport, and talk, and runne about, as though there were no God here; and therefore you should tell your children and servants, it is the word of the Lord child, and it is the word of the Lord servant, it is not the word of man as you may think, but it is the word of the Lord by which you shall one day be judged; the Minister told you that God hateth a proud man, and a drunkard, and an adulterer, and a swearer, why this was the word of the Lord; thus bring the word home unto their soules, and this is the way to bring them home unto God here, that they may receive salvation hereafter; we should use all the cords of mercy, and love, and anger, and indignation; that so if it were possible we might hale the soules of poore sinners to God; oh blessed spirit of Saint Paul in this kind, I wonder what is become of that love & zeale that was in him, as we may see in the 19. of the *Acts*, he travells from place to place, frō countrey to countrey, he goes from house to house, and rappes at every mans doore, perswading men with all patience to be reconciled to God; he dealeth as the nurse doth with her child, the child cries, and strokes, and wrawles, and yet the nurse beares all;  
so.



so doth the Apostle *Paul*, he met with much opposition here, mocked there, imprisoned there, set in the stocks and scourged, and yet he beares all with patience, and perswades, and beseeches men to be reconciled; I say this power, this zeale, this love is gone; if wee had hearts and hands and endeavours, much more might be done in this case, and God might work more mercifully with us, & powerfully by us, for the conversion of poore sinners; and this doth not lie only in the Ministers hands, but, Masters, in yours; and, Officers, in yours; and so much shall serve for this poynt. The next thing considerable in the Text, is from the order, first drawing, then comming; *you cannot come unto me except my father draweth you*, the point is, that God must first pluck us frō sin, before we will fasten our soules upon the Lord Iesus; it is evident, *Mat. 12. 29. no man commeth into a strong mans house*, saith the Text, *unlesse he first bind the strong man*, first there must be binding and casting out, before there can be taking of possession: the house is the heart, and the strong man is Satan; the Lord must bind the one, before he can take possession of the other; the soule must be drawne before it will come to God; however for the manner of this drawing, it be divers, God dealeth with some one way, and some another; some hee drawes with the cords of his mercy, and some with the hookes of conscience; yet this is certaine there must be a drawing, before there can or will be a comming, *Gal. 3. 12. it is said that all men are shut up under sinne, &c. Iob. 1. 12.*

As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sonnes of God; now before the Lord Iesus can be received, the bonds of sinne must be removed, and the lock must bee opened, before the Lord Iesus can come in and bee entertained; but God doth loose these locks divers wayes, as sometimes we may see a man open some easie lock with some trifle, hee slips it haply, or opens it with a picklock; but if he come to a strong one, especially if it bee old and rusty, then hee breaks it in pieces, and that with much violence before hee can open it; so deales the Lord with the soules of sinners, hee slips every lock before he comes in, but sometimes if he meet with a proud sturdy sinner that is rivetted to his corruptions, and scrwed into wickednesse, an old drunkard, or an old blasphemers, if the lock be rusty, then he knocks off al, he breaks the lock and lifts the doore off the hinges; this is true, that all the means of God generally, partly mercy alluring, and conscience rending the heart, both these make the soule see the vilenesse of his sinnes, and the necessity of parting with them; and thus God doth draw before a sinner will come: there must bee a kind of violence offered to the soule before any comming can proceed from the creature, the reasons are these; I will only touch them: first, because every man by nature is a despiser of Christ, and rebellious to Christ, *Mat. 21. 38.* when God sent his Sonne Christ among them, they said, *this is the heire, come let us kill him;* when Christ came to preach the word they did professely labour to slay

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the Lord Iesus, and in the end they did so, *this is the stone which the builders refused*, saith the Scripture: the stone was Christ, they refused Christ, and would not build upon him, so that thus I reason; he that is enemy to the Lord Iesus, will never of himselfe come unto him and beleeve in him; but all are enemies to the Lord Iesus by nature, therefore they will not come unto him, and beleeve in him. Secondly, every man by nature runneth from God, and therefore will not come to God, *Pro. 1. 30.* there saith the text, *they would none of my counsell, they despised my reproofe*; nay, *Ier. 2. 5.* the text saith, they are farre from God, there saith the text, *what iniquity have your fathers found in me that they are gone farre from me*: now if a wicked man hates the word of God, and goes post-haste in the waies of wickednesse, and runnes farre from God, hee is like never to come at him, unlesse God draw him by a holy kind of violence, hee goeth from God and therefore of himselfe will never come to God.

*First Vse:*

The first use is an use of examination; is it so, that drawing is before comming, and that God worketh upon the soule to pluck it from sinne before it will depend upon the Lord Iesus? then hereby examine your soules, whether you ever went to the Lord Iesus or no, and you shall know by this ground, that will never fayle you: namely, observe how the Lord hath wrought upon your soules in this kind; have the cords of truth convinced you? have the cords of mercy perswaded you? hath

have the cords of conscience terrified you? have these cords prevailed with you? if you never sound this, then know, you never set foot forward to salvation; dost thou think to come to Christ without drawing? no no: I speake this for two ends, to check the folly of some men, and reprove the madnesse of other; it checks the idle dreaume and fortist conceit of those that think they may have Christ at halfe an houres warning, that they can cast themselves upon the Lord Iesus when they list; they make it a matter of nothing to beleieve in Christ, if they can but have a little time upon their death-beds to consider of their sinnes and repent for them, then they will rest upon Christ, and cast a good heart upon Christ in this case; this is a common and an ordinarie delusion; but people are deceived, that are of this opinion; what, you come unto the Lord Iesus, and fling your hearts upon him without drawing? it is all one as if wee should conceive some great tree, some mighty oake to pluck it selfe up by the rootes from the place where it groweth, and transplant it selfe in another place; if this be unconceivable, the other is as impossible; a tree cannot be plucked up from ground without a great deale of digging and cutting, so it is with thy soule, thou art rooted into sinne, loving of them and living in them, and continuing in them; and therefore there must be digging and hewing, and breaking and cutting off that proud sturdy heart of thine; before that day come, it will cost thee hot water; the Lord must come down from



heaven, the master of the vineyard must come down and hew downe those trees, and cut you off from the rebellions of *Adam*, before you can be implanted into Christ; never think of coming to God before you have beene drawne by God: besides, as this checks the folly of those men, so it overthrowes the maddnesse of some men, that content themselves, because they never were in this condition, they were never drawne, they count this a matter of comfort, they were never no changlings, this horror of conscience they never saw it, and they blesse the Lord that they never saw that day; oh poore fooles, is this the credit you have, and the comfort you take, that you were never humbled and drawne unto God; it is as though a prodigall child should blesse himselfe, that his father loved him, because his father never cared for him, but cast him off; you would thinke that that man were quite voyd of all reason and understanding that would blesse himselfe because of this condition; if thou never hadst thy eyes opened, nor thy conscience awakened, thy soule never loosened from corruptions, I tell thee, it is the forest argument in the world against thee; hee that walketh in his evill waies and is not troubled and disquieted, take heed of it, for the Lord Iesus sake; it is one of the heaviest arguments against thee; for the Lord saith to *Ierusalem*, *I will not punish your daughters for committing of adultery*: mark that, as if he had said, commit adultery if thou wilt, and take up thy course if thou wilt, I will not plague thee here,

here, but I will punish thee for all hereafter; and it is observable, *Hos. 4. 17. Ephraim is joyous to Idols, let him alone:* as who should say, let him take up his own way, & walk in the imaginations of his heart, and let him not be disturbed; it is a sore suspicion that God never purposeth to worke upon thee, when hee letteth thee lie in ungodly courses without any contradiction; thou art proud, and thou mayest be so; thou art a drunkard, and thou mayest continue so still; thy conscience gives thee way, it never troubles thee; when God never terrifieth thee and draweth thee, it is an argument that God never meaneth to offer any more good unto thee; and dost thou content thy selfe in the greatest curse that ever befell any man under the Sunne? you would thinke it were a madde frantick thing if a man were in a deep pitt where hee could not help himselfe, but must needs perish; if he should glory in this case and say, I am here in this pitt, and if I get not out I shall perish, yet this is my comfort, no body lookes after me, no body will vouchsafe to helpe me; this is thy condition, thou art sunke downe into thy sinnes, and let downe into the bottom of hell, thou stickest there and art like to perish there, and yet for all this thou gloriest, and boastest, and sayst, the Lord will not open my eyes, the Lord will not draw, the Lord will not perswade me, and work upon me, and therefore thou art like to continue there and bee confounded there; is this thy glory? it is the greatest curse that ever befell any man, and therefore if there bee any whose eyes



God hath opened; hath the Lord set in the cord of conscience into thy soule, and let in the flasse of hell fire, and brought thee almost to dispaire, then blessed be the name of God, thou art drawing, goe home, be comforted, thou goest in the right way, be not disquieted in this condition; the Lord is now drawing of thee, hee will anon bring thee to himselfe.

*Second y<sup>e</sup> se.*

Secondly, it is a word of direction, if there must bee drawing before there can bee coming, then what are we to be advised of but this, to blesse God for his worke, when wee see it in our selves or others; wheresoever your see this worke wrought in your selves, or those that belong unto you, blesse God for that mercy; it is a good ground that God intendeth good to a man when hee beginneth the right way; and observe this to check that conceit, and overthrow that cursed opinion; it is the ordinary practise of carnall men in the world, if any that belong to them bee awakened and humbled, they count it the heaviest curse that ever befell them, the greatest crosse that ever came to their houses, the wife, & the childe, is undone; they complaine the wife is so holy, and the servants so devout, that if there be any spare time, they then goe to reading and praying; I wonder whither they will go next I trow, I tell thee, whither they will goe next, they are going now to Christ, and the next journey they take they will goe to heaven, this is the worst newes, and art not thou ashamed to complaine of this: if there be any soule present that is guilty of this

this crime, take notice of it; art thou content thy wife should take up her loose adulterous courses and go to the devill, and not take up a good course and goe to the Lord Iesus Christ? when God is working upon men hee is drawing of them to himselfe, that they may go to the Lord Iesus, and receive mercy from the Lord Iesus, and therefore I beseech the Lord to shew men this sottish conceit, and reforme the same: when thou seest God worke upon a poore soule, then blesse God for the same; is thy wife that was an Adulteresse before, now humbled, doth she now see her sinnes? then goe into a corner and blesse God for the same and say, I have had an untoward wife, but now the Lord (blessed bee his Name) hath humbled her; I had a loose servant that was given to drunkennesse, prophannesse, but now the Lord hath opened his eyes and awakened his conscience, and humbled his soule, and is drawing of him to himselfe, why blesse God for this his glorious comfort, bee comforted herein, and encouraged hereby, and blesse God for the same.

**FINIS.**



this time take notice of it: at thou comest  
with should take up her look adoration courts  
and go to the devil, and not take up a good court  
and go to the Lord Jesus Christ: when God  
working upon men he is drawing of them to him-  
self that they may go to the Lord Jesus, and re-  
ceive mercy from the Lord Jesus, and there-  
fore I beseech the Lord to draw men this foolish  
fancy, and reforme the same: when thou seest  
God worke upon a poore soule then praise God  
for the same: is thy wife that was an Adulteress  
before, now humbled down the now her former  
then go into a corner and praise God for the same  
and say I have kept my wordward wife, but now the  
Lord (which I see his Name) hath humbled her: I  
had a loose servant that was given to drunkenness,  
prophaness, but now the Lord hath opened his  
eyes and awakened his conscience, and humbled  
his soule, and is drawing of him to himselfe, why  
praise God for this his glorious comfort, be-  
cause comforted her, and is comforted  
herby, and praise God

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No man can come unto me, except the  
Father which hath sent me draw him.

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